Sunday, January 18, 2009 ★★ Vol. 24 / No. 41 www.inquirer.net

USHERING IN THE SUNRISE One early morning in the new year, thousands of waterbirds, egrets and terns flock to Balanga City, Bataan, what with its mangroves, wetlands and grasslands which are a natural feast basket for both migratory and endemic birds. In the recent Asian Waterbird Census conducted in at least 58 wetland sites around the country, 15,000 birds of 29 waterbird species were counted in Balanga alone. (Story below) ROMEO ESCALONA

Puno gains more backing

RP wetlands a paradise for birds

By Ross Harper Alonza
Contributor
and Tarrence Oreja
Inquirer Central Luzon

BEFORE THE SLEEPING PEOPLE of Balanga City started to stir and begin their day, members of the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP) made their way to the coastal villages in the chilly, early morning of Jan. 11, to conduct a valuable survey whose results would reflect the state of the world's environment.

That morning, thousands of egrets, whistered terns and black-headed gulls filled the sky as if ushering in the sunrise. It was a magnificent sight for seasoned and beginner birdwatchers in Balanga City in Bataan.

"We feel so blessed," said Rodolfo de Mesa, Balanga's provincial administrator, looking at the wild birds feeding on tiny fish and crustaceans just a few meters from where he stood.

NP WETLANDS A4

GROs retreat from brothels to beauty parlors

By Christian V. Esguerra

THERE'S LIFE OUTSIDE A karaoke bar for GROs.

Fears of an impending global financial crisis hit a row of nightclubs in Pasay City earlier than expected. Gone were the men, mainly middle-income workers, whose continued patronage

GROS RETREAT A4

2M signatures may prod SC chief to run, says bishop

By Leila B. Salaverria

IF THE AVOWALS OF SUPPORT OF POLITICIANS and civil society leaders fail to convince Chief Justice Reynaro Puno to seek the presidency in 2010, maybe two million Filipinos will.

Or so hopes former senator Mio Tayag, a bishop of the Iglesia Catolica Filipina Independiente who has launched a signature campaign to get two million Filipinos to urge the highly regarded magistrate to make the move.

"Siyo ang kumakatawan sa ili pagiging mga, hindi nang may principyo (He is the embodiment of what is not a traditional politician; he is a man of principle)," Tayag said yesterday at the Sophian on Scio Street, where he explained why he had put up the Chief Justice Puno for President Movement.

According to Tayag, the Chief Justice has the virtues that make a good leader. He said Puno was committed to principle, was clean and a Christian.

As for Puno's competence for the top post, Tayag said the country did not need someone street-smart to lead, but someone with moral integrity.

But Supreme Court

PUNO GAINS A2

FILIPINO OF THE YEAR 2008

MANNY PACQUIAO

Editor's Note: Now on its 10th year, the Inquirer's Filipino of the Year honors a living Filipino who made the most positive impact the past year. For 2008, editors and assistant editors heavily favored Manny Pacquiao, the second time he's been chosen. For that feat, the Inquirer is elevating him to its Hall of Fame.

IN AN OLYMPIC YEAR OF EXTRAORDINARY feats and shattered records, a non-Olympian turned in one of the year's most dominating performances, in one of the world's most dangerous sports. Boxer Manny Pacquiao defeated three current or former champions in three heavily watched fights in three different weight divisions—and emerged as boxing's newest global superstar.

For making this forbidding peak of achievement, for reinventing himself as a compleat boxer of high discipline and uncommon gallantry and, not least, for inspiring millions of Filipinos with his uplifting example of hard work and sense of purpose, Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao is the Philippine Daily Inquirer's Filipino of the Year for 2008.

This is the second time Pacquiao has been voted the Filipino with the greatest positive impact in the preceding 12 months. Inquirer editors named him Filipino of the Year for 2003, when he wrested the boxing world with an 11th round demolition of Hall of Fame-bound Mexican icon Marco Antonio Barrera and took his place on the world stage.

He becomes only the second Filipino to win the honor twice—former President Corazon Aquino was recognized for her continuing contributions to the democratic restoration in 1997 (a distinction shared with Jaime Cardinal Sin) and again in 1999).

A near majority of editors voted for Pacquiao; once again, Chief Justice Reynato Puno, who has sounded the call for moral renewal even as he faces the prospect of increased isolation in his

MANNY A10

Little big man on campus gets 92 cents on retirement

By Nikko Dizon

A RARE COMING TOGETHER of University of the Philippines alumni is taking place in cyberspace because of a man who served their alma mater for 41 years, not only cleaning classrooms but also acting as a lifeline to cash-strapped students.

An e-mail written by UP graduate Mike Rivera about now-retired janitor Melleon Zamora, who signed her student loan application as a guarantor in 1980, continues to be forwarded from one inbox to another.

Rivera, 36, had intended it as a cyberall to all those who failed to pay the student loans that her "hero" had guaranteed.

The e-mail, titled "Payag si Mang Melleon sa Mang Milyon," brought unexpected wide attention to Zamora, who turned out to be fighting for the retirement pay he be-

LITTLE BIG A6

WHAT'S INSIDE

Cristina Ponce Enrile more than ever loves 2 men in her life: God and husband Johnny, who tells her of his love every day
/ SUNDAY LIFESTYLE

In a split second, US Airways pilot is a global hero
• Kidnapped Red Cross workers call their office to say they are unharmed
/ NEWS

IMAGES 2008: THE YEAR THAT WAS

See Pages A10-A11

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

NOC DIGIT 7 8 6 6 4 2 — SUERTRES 2 3 3 — 6 7 9 — EZ2 7 1 7 10 — 2 6 1 — 6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN 2 4 6 14 15 21 P13,915,504.00

3 Red Cross workers unharmed

Gordon says they made 2 phone calls to colleagues as 'proof of life'

THREE WORKERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE of the Red Cross who were kidnapped in Sulu were able to call ICRC officials to say they were "unharmed."

The three made the call on Friday, a day after they were abducted by motorcycle-riding gunmen on Feb. island, said ICRC spokesman Alain Aeberhard.

Nilsson said there was no further information on their whereabouts, and she declined to give other details regarding the phone call.

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, said they had "proof of life, but no details, as far."

"We are, of course, relieved to have heard their voices and to know that they are safe," said Jean Daniel Tirier, head of the ICRC delegation in Manila, in a statement.

Tirier said the ICRC would not comment further in order to avoid jeopardizing the safety of the hostages.

Gordon said two calls came made, one on Friday night and the other early yesterday morning, to inform their ICRC colleagues that the hostages were safe and unharmed.

He said both calls were brief and only the hostages talked with the ICRC representative.

He said no demands were made by the kidnappers and the ICRC and PNRC were not in negotiations with them.

Gordon said the hostages had not called Bob Eaddies as it appeared the calls to the ICRC were the only ones followed by their capture.

Andrew Mertha, 38, of Switzerland, Eugenio Vagni, 45, of Italy, and Andreas Lacoba, 37, of the Philippines were headed to the airport on Thursday after visiting a jail in Jolo town on Jolo island, a known stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf group, when they were abducted by motorcycle-riding gunmen.

The three were involved in a water and sanitation project at the jail. The ICRC team was kidnapped a few hundred yards from the prison facility where they had gone to inspect the project.

Authorities said the abduction was under Albader Parad, a notorious leader of the Abu Sayyaf rebel group. They said the gunmen were meeting instead Indonesia in the interior of Jolo when found it known to operate, where they may turn over the hostages to Parad.

Jolo police chief Senior Supt. Juhaimin Jamiri presently said Parad himself participated in the kidnapping.

He said another Abu Sayyaf leader, Jamalan Pundi, was positively identified as being with the group that snatched the ICRC team.

Earlier the other day said evidences had started a jail guard, Ruben Abu, as one of the kidnappers. Abu is a nephew of Parad. Jamiri said police were tracking down a number of people related to Abu.

Sightings in wooded area

Yesterday, Brandt Johnsen, police chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the authorities had received reports of sightings of the captives but was reluctant to go to a wooded area near Indanan which had not been scoured by troops and local police.

"We get information from some residents fleeing the area," Johnsen said yesterday.

"The people have been helping us but they are leaving their homes because they're afraid they might get caught in the middle of military operations," Johnsen said.

Johnsen said informants had reported that the two foreign hostages were seen by villagers being guarded by armed men in Maimbung, near Indanan last Friday.

The 10-trained Philippine Army searching for the hostages in the jungles of Jolo have been hampered by monsoon rains and bad visibility.

Sakur Tan, governor of Sulu province, which includes Jolo, said there had been no clashes between the kidnappers and pursuing troops since Thursday.

American soldiers were providing second-combat "assistance and advice" to Filipino forces on the current kidnapping, according to a US military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Gordon denied reports the ICRC had suspended its operations in Mindanao after the abduction. He said the ICRC and PNRC would not stop their humanitarian work in Mindanao, particularly among the 300,000 residents displaced by the fighting between government forces and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"The ICRC plans to continue its operations in the Philippines and fully expects to carry on assisting and protecting those affected by this armed conflict," said Tirier.

Jail project suspended

But the ICRC said it had temporarily suspended the water and sanitation project at the provincial jail.

"The ICRC may not be able to finish its work in Jolo because of the abduction but it is determined to help the people in question," said Gordon.

Nelson said the Red Cross was continuing its operations in other areas of Mindanao affected by the fighting between government troops and the MILF.

The abduction of the ICRC team is the most high-profile kidnapping of foreigners since BOC ... Ayumar Pilongco Jr., Angelyn Vinzons, Julie Alipala and Arefly Madera, Inquirer Mindanao; Kristine L. Alave, Mindanao and AP, AFP and Reuters

RP asks Egypt to let Pinoys in from Gaza

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN affairs (DFA) said yesterday it had not given up on its request to Egypt to open its borders to Filipinos still trapped in war-torn Gaza.

This according to Foreign Undersecretary for Philippine Overseas Affairs Esteban Conejos Jr. who briefed reporters recently on the status of Filipinos in Gaza, particularly those who failed to join more than 200 foreign nationals evacuated by the Red Cross from the battle-ground of the Israeli forces and Hamas fighters.

Unless the Egypt-Gaza border is ready, a spokesman said they will have to wait until the northern Israeli-Gaza border of Erez is safe for travel, Conejos said.

As of now, there has been no response from the Egyptian government, he said.

The 91 Filipinos still in Gaza, mostly the wives of Palestinians, were hesitant to leave because Israeli authorities refused to allow their husbands to leave with them.

"We are not giving up on Egypt," Conejos said. Cynthia D. Balana

More rains, floods seen in Mindanao

A LOW PRESSURE AREA SPOTTED OFF Mindanao is expected to bring more rains and flash floods to the region, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said yesterday.

A Pagasa bulletin posted on its website said the low pressure area was spotted 335 kilometers east of southern Mindanao.

Nathaniel Cruz, chief of Pagasa's weather bureau, said the low pressure area was interacting with the wind from currently affecting the Visayas.

"The moist were rains for Mindanao and the Visayas regions," Cruz said.

Pagasa said the northeast monsoon or amihan and General Luzon still experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered light rains. The rest of region, the Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, interacting widespread rains over eastern sections of the Visayas and Mindanao. This may trigger flashfloods and landslides, it said.

The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with scattered rains.

The northeast monsoon is blowing into Luzon and could affect the southeastern of Luzon and the Visayas, Pagasa said. The agency said wind speeds in Mindanao, particularly among the provinces would persist for the next two days. General winters in these areas will be moderate to rough.

Seaplant cyclones were spotted within the Philippines' area of responsibility, Pagasa said.

A low pressure area is considered by weather forecasters to be a solid form of tropical depression.

A cold front is formed on the borders of cold and warm air masses. In the case of the Philippines, the cold air comes from the northeast monsoon while warm air flows in from the Pacific Ocean. In these boundaries, clouds are formed that could lead to rains.

The northeast monsoon, which blows into the country from the northeast hemisphere beginning in October persists until around February or March.

Meanwhile, temperatures in Baguio City stood up all from several lows with Pagasa recording 9.6 degrees Celsius yesterday. On Thursday temperatures in the highest city in the country were recorded at 7.5 degrees Celsius, one degree higher than Baguio City's record of 6.5 degrees in January 1961.

Temperatures in Quezon City yesterday were recorded at 18.6 degrees Celsius at 5 a.m. Alcuin Papa

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Afraid to visit Mindanao? Go to Intramuros instead

By Kristine L. Alave

DECADES OF A SECESSIONIST WAR HAVE kept many tourists away from Mindanao, so tourism officials have decided to bring the region's many riches of and historical sites to them.

Those curious to see the unique traditions and products of Mindanao can sample the region's best at the "#MW Philippines" conference in Intramuros, Manila, up to Feb. 6.

Also a four-year history, #MW Philippines has opened its regional exhibit halls, including those for Region XII and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Region XII is composed of North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat. The ARMM, on the other hand, is composed of Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Maguindanao.

The two regions, home to various equestrian groups, are among the least explored tourist destinations in the Philippines.

Peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) broke down middle of last year and hostilities have resumed.

The region's image has also been marred by the series of kidnappings of foreign tourists, media personnel and aid workers. Last Thursday, three members of the International Committee of the Red Cross were abducted in broad daylight in Jolo, Sulu. (See main story, above.)

Several countries have advised their nationals not to travel to the troubled southernmost region.

Tourism officials hope the Region XII and ARMM exhibits would make the public realize that Mindanao has so much to offer.

Datu Dimasampao, Region XII director, said they grabbed the chance to accept the exhibit "to improve the image of Region XII and the ARMM."

According to Dimasampao, news about bombings and abductions in Region XII and the ARMM had virtually killed the region's tourism programs.

At the opening of the exhibit on Tuesday, fashion designers exhibited clothes made of indigenous woven fabrics. Dancers demonstrated traditional dances and costumes of the many indigenous tribes in the ARMM and Region XII.

The exhibit also features food from the regions, including General Santos City's tuna delicacies.

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Palace: WB-barred RP firms may face raps

THREE DELISTED COMPANIES blacklisted by the World Bank would face charges if investigation finds they won a road contract through corruption, Malacañang said yesterday.

The World Bank said Thursday it had evidence of collusion among four Chinese and three Filipino construction firms in the bidding for a bank-funded road project in the Philippines.

"There is no reason or nothing to charge those involved once it can be proven. They engaged in irregularities," deputy presidential spokesperson Anthony Golez told a radio interview.

"Once it is proven there are violations of our laws, that is the proper time we charge those people in the proper forum, the courts," he said.

The World Bank subsequently cancelled the tender for the contract worth a total of $20 million, and banned the firms from future bidding.

The Senate yesterday said it would open an inquiry into the issue. The House of Representatives also said it would look into the allegations of collusion by the companies.

Opposition Sen. Pacific Lacson said he would file a resolution when the Senate reopens on Monday to ask the blue chip bank and public works committees to jointly undertake an investigation.

Lacson said the inquiry would be an exercise of Congress's oversight function and the outcome would be the filing of graft charges against the government officials "and other personalities involved in the anomalies."

He wondered why the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), which has jurisdiction over sourced foreign loans, did discover the collusion among the contractors.

It took bank to notice

"It's disturbed, to say the least, that it took the World Bank to take notice and action against the Filipino contractors," Lacson said.

Other has called on the World Bank to provide evidence of graft by the Chinese contractors here.

"The companies said there were flaws in the World Bank's investigation in terms of evidence and investigation procedures," Yeo Aun, spokesperson of China's commerce ministry, said in a statement posted on his ministry's website.

"The bank did not respond to their inquiries and the enterprises hope the World Bank will give a clear explanation. If the evidence is relevant enough, the government will look into it in accordance with Chinese law," he said.

The World Bank barred China Road and Bridge Corp. firms participating in bids for eight years, China Shanxi Construction Corp. and China Wu Yi Co. for six years, and China Geo Engineering Corp. for four years.

Philippine E.C. de Leon Construction Corp. and its sole proprietor, Eduardo de Leon, were both barred indefinitely—the first permanent banning since 2004, the bank said.

The other Philippine firms, Philip Cardio Lloyd Infrastructural Construction and Development Corp. and CM Pancho Construction, were each banned for four years.

No funds dispersed

All seven were bidding on contracts under the first phase of the National Roads Improvement and Management Program, known as NLRMP 1, which the World Bank had agreed to fund.

The World Bank said no funds from the project were disbursed to the firms. It said it stopped about $16 million from being awarded.

At a result of the World Bank findings, the government has temporarily disqualified all seven firms from participating in biddings for public construction projects, whether funded by state revenues or by local and foreign lenders.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, however, said the blacklisted companies should be immediately and permanently banned by executive policy in government projects.

"The government should act swiftly by terminating and filing charges against those involved in aforesaid position. The World Bank has already provided data that would prove the anomalies in this particular project. I dont see any reason why this issue would be dwarfed or be light among Pangilinan said in a statement. AFP and Michael Lim Mira

Erap can't run, his lawyer says

By Leila B. Salaverria

CONVICTED PLUNDERER EX-President Joseph "Erap" Estrada will be putting his loyalties to trial if he listens to calls for him to run for President in 2010, according to his former lawyer Alan Paguia.

The disgraced leader, who was convicted of plunder and sentenced to 40 years in prison, but was immediately pardoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo, could be sent to jail for violating the terms of his pardon.

Paguia believes Estrada cannot seek the presidency again "because of the condition of his pardon where he has undertaken not to seek any political position."

Estrada's advisers who are urging him to run again in 2010 do not seem to realize the consequences of their advice, said Paguia, who spoke at the Kapihan sa Sulo news forum yesterday.

"They may be jeopardizing the freedom being enjoyed by the President," he said.

Contrary to what the press has reported and what Estrada himself has said, Estrada's pardon was conditional and not absolute, Paguia said.

According to the terms of the pardon, Estrada, whose presidency was aborted when he was deposed in the second people power uprising of 2001, cannot seek public office again, Paguia said.

From a legal standpoint, violating its terms could be tantamount to overdoing a contract, he said.

Paguia explained that the pardon was in the nature of a contract.

And since the contract is rescinded, Estrada would go straight to jail to serve out his sentence.

"There is no more pardon if you violate the contract," Paguia said.

During a chit to the interview last year, Estrada claimed his pardon did not set conditions that he not seek public office again.

Last month, he said that if the opposition forces fail to unite, he himself would run for president in 2013.

Paguia, an Ateneo de Manila University professor, was among those who represented Estrada in his plunder trial and perform stints.

He said the pardon was a "Damocles' sword" hanging over Estrada's head because there is no telling what the administration would do if he breaks one of the conditions of the pardon.

THE FAMILY of Mary Eposo is led by her son, former President Joseph Estrada (center), prays over her casket during the funeral mass at the St. John the Baptist Church yesterday. GARY ALMO

High court to tackle environment in 3rd forum

By Leila B. Salaverria

AFTER SPEARHEADING TWO multisectoral summits that addressed the unresolved killings in the country and the poor's access to justice, the Supreme Court is planning to sponsor a third forum, this time on the environment.

Scheduled for April, the forum would seek ways the judiciary could take a more active role in protecting nature, said the high tribunal's spokesperson Midas Marquez.

"We want to see how the courts can help in the protection of the environment in this environment of issues," told Marquez yesterday at the Kapihan sa Sulo news forum.

Other orgs invited

Marquez said the court had invited representatives from the departments of environment and natural resources, justice and tourism, and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and Philippine Bar Association to the summit.

It has also invited University of the Philippines law professor Jurnicio Opose, who had argued and won the landmark case in which the Supreme Court directed government agencies to enforce Manila Bay to its pristine state and keep it that way.

Marquez said the Manila Bay case—rumored because the high court's decision included an order to maintain the bay's cleanliness—prompted the tribunal to call for the forum on environmental concerns.

The court also wants to see whether the recent administration reorganizations and advocacy groups could play in preserving the country's natural resources, Marquez said.

Earlier events successful

The high tribunal had earlier organized two summits meant to hear cases involving the violation of laws protecting the country's natural resources. The courts were summoned to ensure the speedy disposition of the cases.

The two earlier forums sponsored by the Supreme Court had produced results, according to the Marquez.

He said the 2007 summit on extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances of political members of the state resulted in the promulgation of the Rules of the Writs of amparo and habeas data—judicial remedies that people could use to seek protection, freedom and the release of detained but in connection with those cases by the Army and the PNP.

The second forum in 2008, which discussed the problems of the poor and marginalized when it came to getting justice, resulted to an expanded notion of Writs' program under which long pending cases of poor suspected languishing in jail could be resolved quickly and, in most cases, transformed into ruling convictions.

We will miss you, Estrada tells ma at funeral

By Edwin C. Tamayo Jr.

HE KEPT HIS HEAD BOWED, trying to conceal the tears. For the last time, deposed President Joseph Estrada kissed his mother, Maria Marcela Ejercito, goodbye.

"We will miss you, mama," said Estrada in his remarks at the funeral mass for Ejercito that preceded her burial at the Manila Memorial Park-Sucat Public Cemetery yesterday.

At the funeral in the family mausoleum, Estrada kissed his mother's right hand, the same hand he was clasping when the dowager queen of showbiz expired last Monday, this was 1:01.

He then kissed his mother on the forehead and briefly stood in front of the coffin.

The three-day wake for Ejercito, known to family and friends as "Doña Mare," did not last long: family members and political allies, superstars of showbiz and, surprisingly, even the mighty stood in solemn tribute to the matriarch of the Estrada clan.

Some 300 people gathered at St. John the Baptist Church on Polaris Street in San Juan for the 9 a.m. funeral mass officiated by Bishop Teodoro Bacani.

The crowd included government political figures, like Rep. Jose de Venecia, his wife Gina, Sen. Manuel Villar, as well as ordinary people from the neighborhood. Movie actor Eddie Garcia was also at the cemetery.

Singer Dulce sang Ejercito's favorite songs, "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "Forever Love."

"I will do my best to keep my promise to you," Estrada said in his brief remarks.

In an earlier interview, his first public appearance after his mother's death, Estrada lamented that his mother had died without seeing him being fully cleared.

Residents lined streets

Estrada, his sons Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito and Aide Estrada, were among those who carried the coffin from the altar to the hearse.

The funeral cortege left the church at 10:45 a.m. as residents lined both sides of Pinaglabanan Street, which flowed down to the World Peace Avenue.

Some held up their cell phones, purporting to take photos. Some of the flowers had cardboard signs in front, expressing the residents' condolences.

The cortege traveled the 10-kilometer-long route from the church to the cemetery in less than 15 minutes. The main artery of the metropolis leading to the family mausoleum was lined with wreaths.

There were so many wreaths not enough to rest the almost 300 family members gathered inside the mausoleum. Though it was filled with people, the mausoleum was quiet, with only the priest speaking.

Estrada sat to the front row beside his wife, Loi. Jinggoy sat behind him while JV Ejercito stood on the hill side near his father.

Jinggoy and Jackie Ejercito Estrada's children, Jolo, Julian and Janella, were also present.

Estrada's daughter Jude Ejercito Ejercito, who is married to Senator Jinggoy Estrada, Junior of the great grandchildren were also in tears.

Parents finally together

Estrada stood by the coffin after it was closed and helped to push it into the tomb which also held the remains of his father, Emilio Ejercito, who died in 1977.

Estrada has said that although he was serving a jail sentence at his mother's passing, he has found comfort in the thought that his parents are finally together.

"I believe that my father had long been waiting for her."

At a result of the World Bank findings, the government has temporarily disqualified all seven firms from participating in biddings for public construction projects, whether funded by state revenues or by local and foreign lenders.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, however, said the blacklisted companies should be immediately and permanently banned by executive policy in government projects.

"The government should act swiftly by terminating and filing charges against those involved in aforesaid position. The World Bank has already provided data that would prove the anomalies in this particular project. I dont see any reason why this issue would be dwarfed or be light among" Pangilinan said in a statement. AFP and Michael Lim Mira

Firm wants more time to reroute power lines in Makati

By Abigail L. Ho

DESPITE A SUPREME COURT decision ordering the relocation of a major power line in Dasmariñas Village, the new operators of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) on still-unclear terms cannot move to reroute their electricity distribution system.

Violeta Reyes, the new chief executive of what is now the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), reviewed during turnover procedures and find discouraging the court's second 2006 writ. Transco-Amaseo line that passes through the exclusive Makati village could cause cancer among its residents and a possible increase in power rates.

Reyes said Presidential Executive Legal Service had instructed the NGCP to find ways to remedy the situation, in light of the Supreme Court decision in October last year. A Makati court has not set a date for the dismissal's writ of execution.

Old-lined plants

Right now, Reyes said NGCP was looking countering the legues with residents of Barangay Forbes Park to listen to their concerns and at the same time to tell them about the economic consequences of shutting the Taft-Amaseo line down."

"Enforcing the Supreme Court decision immediately will create much losses to the system," he said.

He claimed that should the line be shut down, the electricity would have to be rerouted to other lines. Power plants using expensive oil would have to be fired up just to keep up with electricity demand.

Reyes warned that affected households and businesses would have to endure watching brownouts as it not to overload any of the other lines. He even brought up the possibility of a "Luzon-wide blackout."

"We will follow the Supreme Court decision. It's not it's executive to finally sort but there are the implications," Reyes said.

Although these arguments were also raised during the en banc legal battle, the Supreme Court on Oct. 28 issued a final and executory decision ordering the immediate relocation of the Taft-Amaseo line, favoring the residents.

The residents first filed a case in the Makati Regional Trial Court on March 9, 2000, citing the health hazard caused by the electromagnetic radiation generated by the transmission lines.

Win in high court

The Makati RTC issued a temporary restraining order on April 3, 2000, but this was reversed by the Court of Appeals the following month.

The Dasmariñas residents then brought the case up to the Supreme Court and won the battle on March 23, 2006, with the high tribunal's reversal of the appellate court's decision.

In its decision, the Supreme Court said there was sufficient evidence to show that the power lines would be endangering the health and safety of residents of the area.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay had sided with the residents, saying Transco's threats of brownouts were "unsubstantiated" to cover up the serious health risks posed by these hydrocells-designed transmission lines.

The SC decision became final and executory on Oct. 28, 2008, but Transco filed a request to be given until the end of January to mitigate the effects of the transmission line shutdown.

According to NGCP officials, the Jan. 31 deadline, as contained in the Transco pleading, would not have to be followed, as the judge had delivered the writ of execution and no new date had been set.

At a result of the World Bank findings, the government has temporarily disqualified all seven firms from participating in biddings for public construction projects, whether funded by state revenues or by local and foreign lenders.

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"The government should act swiftly by terminating and filing charges against those involved in aforesaid position. The World Bank has already provided data that would prove the anomalies in this particular project. I dont see any reason why this issue would be dwarfed or be light among" Pangilinan said in a statement. AFP and Michael Lim Mira

Popular priest's killers still free

GUIMBAL CITY—It has been more than a year since Fr. Bernardo Nadres was killed in a drive-by shooting in Tete, Tara Province as the suspects has been caught.

Hoping a lifter on the parish's first death anniversary Thursday in Tabuenan, Iloilo Province, parishioners and his colleagues, however, said they were hopeful justice would soon be attained.

Father Nadres' killers remain at large but Tabuenanons are hopeful they will be behind bars soon," said Fr. Fermin Berna, the organizer of the Diocese of Iloilo Inc. newsletter (DIN).

Nadres, of the OMI, was director of the Notre Dame school in Tabuenan and head of the mission station when he was killed at the age of 53.

The 39 gunmen identified as Abu Sayyaf members who encamped in a thicket Nadres but ended up killing him also took captive a teacher at Notre Dame and a Tabuenan. The Tabuenan was killed when the motorcycle took her head while the hostages were released a few days later.

Remains, who concelebrated the Mass, said Tabuenanons remembered Nadres with a parade, flowers and candles at the spot where his body was found at 8:15 p.m. on Jan. 15 last year.

"A clinic in the public school there he started to build was also inaugurated Thursday. The project would benefit the people of Tabuenan, who had long been denied basic health services," said Remains.

In his homily, Archbishop Angelito Lacuna described Nadres as dedicated, a hard worker and someone whose heart was with the poor.

"While he was eligible for other assignments after so many years in Tabuenan, Father they opted to continue his difficult and risky ministries in. (The town) because he really loved the people, especially the lumad and the children who have difficulty [getting] formal education," Lacuna said. Inflicted in the months. *Inquirer Mindanao*

KIDS FOR ORAL HEALTH
Child-victims await their turn at the free dental checkups at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City during yesterday's launch of the Oral Health Month. The "care camp" mission is aimed at all members organized for the month of February by Colgate in cooperation with the Philippine Dental Association and the Department of Education.

Drug testing preventive, not punitive–Sotto

DRUG ABUSE IS A HEALTH issue for students and the proposed random drug testing in schools is preventive, not punitive, he insisted.

"This was the intention of the late Sen. Heherson "Heh" Alvarez, chairman of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), in he allowed the tests that ring testing, which is a major component of a comprehensive campaign against illegal drugs, would violate the human rights of students.

Leila de Lima, chair of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), had objected to the random testing and had warned law enforcers to respect the rights of the child, particularly those enshrined by the United Nations, in the implementation of the drug tests.

SOTTO Also Supreme Court ruling

Sotto cited a recent Supreme Court ruling which upheld drug testing as legal and constitutional. He said drug testing was proposed after consultations and that it had been part of the branch's program since 2003.

He added that, in the fight against illegal drugs, it was important to wipe out the drug lords' powerful market—the vulnerable youths and live schools.

"Without that conduct, the drug trade will die a natural death. Where the buying stops, the selling stops, too," Sotto said.

For drug testing to come to the fore in several weeks when the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency accused some prosecutors of accepting bribes to dismiss the case against the so-called "Alabang Boys"—Richard Brodett, Joseph "Jeremy" and Jorge Joseph.

In the wake of the scandal, President Macapagal-Arroyo took charge of the unfolding problem by appointing herself secretary of drugs ease and maintaining the random drug testing in schools.

Sotto said the DDB need not worry about any human rights being violated with the random drug testing, saying the families of those picked for testing would be alerted and notified immediately of the results.

De Lima, in a press statement, had expressed fears that "in the absence of guidelines formulated in a democratic, consultative manner, this random drug testing focused on the youth of this land especially in the hands of overzealous law enforcement officers can potentially put the child's human rights in danger of being violated."

De Lima said the CHR "supports legitimate" efforts by government to combat the drug menace. With a report from Alexis Romero

'Extinct' pelican rediscovered in Leyte

By Vicente S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

A RARE PELICAN SPECIES SAID EXTINCT in Leyte by scientists for the regional office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-8).

Anselmo Mejias of the DENR's Protected Areas and Wildlife Division said they discovered what could be the Spot-billed Pelican (Pelecanus philippensis) at Lake Bito, Barangay Anahib, Merida, Leyte, on Wednesday while they were conducting a monitoring of water birds in the area.

The bird pelicans was sighted blackwater morning resting on a floating bamboo raft inside a fish pen on the lake. But before Mejias and his team could go near and take close-up pictures, the bird swam away.

"Residents in the area told us they first noticed the big bird on the lake on Tuesday," Mejias told the reporters on Thursday.

Citing information from the "A Guide to the Birds of the Philippines," by Robert S. Kennedy et. al., Mejias said the the Spot-billed Pelican is believed to have been extinct "probably since the 1960s."

A Spot-billed Pelican has white feathers, dark feet, weight from 4.1 to 6 kilos and has a flying ranger that considers top to South-ern China. The bird's beak is pinkish yellow but has black spots on the upper mandible, according to the Philippine field guide.

Mejias said the Spot-billed Pelicans once inhabited Laguna de Bay, the Candaba swamps, the coastal areas of Bataan and some parts of Mindanao.

Dalmatian pelican

However, Tita Pelias, one of the authors of "A Guide to the Birds of the Philippines," said he believes the bird sighted in Leyte could be a Dalmatian pelican (Pelecanus crispus), based on photos sent to him yesterday by a biodiversity conservation group based in Cebu.

"There is a million words of value on the pelican's cheek. The only pelican likely to end up in the Philippines is the Dalmatian pelican which is found in China and moves to Hong Kong during migration season. Because of the cold front we've been experiencing, the pelicans must have flown out to the Philippines," Senen Pelias said in a phone interview on Friday.

Stressing that the pelican species needs to be immediately saved, he said the Spot-billed Pelican is found in India and Sri Lanka and is not likely to turn up in these parts.

He also said the Dalmatian pelican is a rare bird "and if we could record it, it this would be the very first time it has been sighted in the Philippines," said Pelias, who was to Mr. Kharghal, Gaguyan de Oro, handling a team of Outlook in the late of the phone interview.

Waterfowl census

Mejias, meanwhile, said they were at Lake Bito conducting a waterfowl census in line with the annual Asian Waterbird Census to run Jan. 10 to 25.

Mejias said they, he said, is a regional program to promote public participation to monitor the distribution and population of water birds and the status of wetlands.

According to Mejias, Lake Bito in Hindoloran, Leyte, is one of the 12 wetlands in the region that they are monitoring.

RP wetlands a paradise for birds

From page A1

"The birds have been coming for years but we didn't give them a second thought or considered how their annual visits could benefit our city," De Silva said. "We realized our city has a healthy ecosystem that must be preserved if we want our fisherfolk tourists to continue to return every year."

The city of Balingoa is a residential and agricultural city. It is the newest, but one of the most frequented birdwatching sites in the Philippines, with at least 33 species and 15 families of birds recorded.

The "Ducks" members were joined by thousands of volunteers across Asia and Australasia, who also rushed to wetlands in their respective countries to count water-birds. It marked the first day of the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC), an annual project coordinated by Wetlands International in the Netherlands, a global organization that monitors the status of wetlands and waterbird populations.

The census is held annually in two weeks during the second and third weeks of January since it was initiated in 1987 in the Indian subcontinent. Today it covers the complete of Asia, from Pakistan eastward to Japan, Southeast Asia and Australia. It also now parallel to other international counts of waterbirds in Africa, Europe, West Asia and Neotropics under the umbrella of the International Waterbird Census.

"The data we submit to the AWC has international and national importance," said Gerardo Espeleta, a wildlife biologist and founding member of the WBCP who joined international workshop in 2004, when he was discovered a new bird species—a crake and the Calayan Rail—in the Babuyan island group.

"It took him an intensified program to maintain accurate view of the waterbird population size, status and trends. The census provides an opportunity for us to forge bonds by working relationships with local governments and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and to increase public awareness of the role of waterbirds and the need to protect their wetland habitats," she said.

"It's important to get more people involved to help identify the birds, validate their numbers and properly educate the people about them," Espeleta added. "The more the waterbird sites are more monitored, it is easier for the authorities to protect possible hotspots. We also remind them that there is still no conclusive evidence of infection from migratory birds. Human infection and wild bird contamination have been traced to close contact with infected domestic fowl."

Migration pattern

From September to March, massive numbers of birds all over the world leave their breeding grounds in search for warmer places in search of food. It is an annual worth-each migration pattern that takes them halfway across the world.

The Batasan peninsula is one of the East Asian-Australian flyways in the route taken by many species. Some birds have used for ages. Balingoa City's thick mangrove forest, wetlands, grasslands and coastline have provided a natural food basket for both migratory and endemic bird species for years, making the area one of the most populated bird sites in the Philippines.

Birdwatching tours

This year, the total counts submitted to the AWC is 15,251, making it to the prime list of birdwatching destinations in the country. Despite the positive change in attitude towards the wild waterbirds in Balingoa, there are still those who do not subscribe to their protection.

"The birds are the birds regardless the current buyers stock their fishponds and the farmers blame the birds whenever they have a poor harvest," said Orly de Guzman, a fisherman and resident of Barangay Silvercity, who is also a bird guide volunteer.

"They used to kill these birds but since the bird-watching tours started, it is now prohibited to hunt them. I tell the poor hunters to just chase the birds away with loud noise. I hope to be trained to become a proper bird guide because this will give me another source of income," he said.

Rare birds spotted

Last year, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said birdwatching could be the next big recreation area, after WBCP president Efrikhad Ira presented data showing that approximately 600 bird species have been sighted in the Philippines, of which 200 are endemic and found nowhere else in the world. This suggests that the country may have the highest number of endemic species per land area in the world.

In the Candido Swamp, Bulacan, two rare migratory birds—the black-faced spoonbill and pied avocet—were seen for the first time during the Asian Waterbird Census yesterday, adding new species to the fish wetland in Central Luzon.

The black-faced spoonbill (Platalea minor) was last seen in 1934 in Manila Bay, according to the WBCP president, citing information from the book "A Guide to the Birds of the Philippines," by Robert S. Kennedy et. al.

The WBCP also received reports that the species was spotted in Palawan between 2003 and 2004, and in Batanes in 2005, La said. "Probably because of the long cold season in Taiwan, it came for the first time in Candaba," he said, adding that there are less than 2,000 black-faced spoonbills in the world.

The first recorded sighting of the pied avocet (Recurvirostra avosetta) was in March 1991, in Puerto Princesa City. It was again spotted in the coastal lagoon of Pandacaqui City in 2007, latest data from the WBCP showed.

Only one bird for each of the two rare species was seen.

The Candaba Swamp, stretching 30,000 hectares, straddles eastern Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. Although past census results continued to prove that the swamp has been supporting a large population of migratory birds from October to February and thriving more rare species, it has also been declared a protected area by the government.

What he is, government did was to ban bird poaching, Mayor Jerry Pelayo said.

Fewer birds this year

The WBCP and DENR recorded 11,463 birds out of 41 species in Candaba. The count is 3,000 fewer than last year's tally of more than 17,000, according to La and Bulgebo Trinidad, chief of the DENR's protected wildlife unit.

Gonzales's tally was similar to counts in 2008, it was learned.

The current bird population in the Candaba Swamp may be less threatening, said Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, who will preside during the AWC.

He thanked Pelayo for converting his ponds as sanctuaries for birds, and urged local officials to protect and preserve the natural environment.

The Candaba Swamp is one of the wetlands in Central Luzon. The others are the Pinatubo Lake in Capas, and Tarlac; Bongabon Dam, both in Nueva Ecija; Puerto Rivas in Bataan; Dingalan Bay, and Casanda in Mandalay, also in Pampanga.

GROs retreat ...

From page A1

helped so-called "parent volunteer officers," or GROs, get between the toughest of times.

Eva said her five friends, who were working in the automotive industry, realized they would have to look for seamless sources of income and fast.

"We were thinking of ways to join an hospitality guild and stumbled in a three-week food preparation and service housekeeping and cosmetology, convinced them now like outside the box," she said.

Today the girls run a small but thriving beauty parlor, thanks to the government's livelihood training program and the P15,000 capital each of them borrowed to jump-start a modest business.

A similar program needed the a recently 37-year-old father from the Pueblo close to Tondo. With no training to do, he passed the other trainees and attended a five-week course on offbeats.

The new skill landed him a job as a masseur at the Port Area. He holds handsome skills trained, well-groomed feet and wears a sharp uniform that conceals his humble beginnings. He earns at least P350 daily.

There are numerous cases, big and small, that the government hopes to replicate across the country when the global financial crisis hits the Philippines during the first quarter of the year.

They're the star of the multi-four Comprehensive Livelihood, Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP) crafted short by Labor Secretary in preparation for the economic turmoil.

"The objective," Domingo Panganiban of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, the project's grassroots monitor, said.

Panganiban said the government was working with the mindset that the country would be hit by the crisis in the second half and in such, his agency should come up with a concrete contingency plan.

The CLEEP approach was a key component of such a plan, which in turn, some P200 billion in the proposed P1.44 (5-trillion national budget for the year.

Hard to believe, but Pangan has never had an applicant could land a job at a government agency right after graduation as long as the requirements were observed were complete. At once, he said jobseekers would waste days in employment.

The Department of Education, for instance, will require security guards and utility workers for its school buildings it is set to put up in different areas.

Panganiban said President Macapagal-Arroyo herself had pointed to the need for more jobless during one visit to a public school. Study hop tuition was granted the observation, he said.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority will freeze up its array of street vendors oddly labeled "Palo Oyster" (Out of School Youth) forcing Toward Economic Recovery).

Panganiban said there were second 150,000 of these now, entering second 9,000 daily.

In Pagasa, La he said there would be job openings in each of the 376 "Bahay ng Barangay" launches the subsidized grocery store-cum-pawnshop businesses to establish as part of the CLEEP.

He said each pharmacy, where capital would come from the Estrangero's invested revenues allocated to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, would need at least two employees.

But what lies ahead of one will some agent or bank teller who has had hitch because of the salary?

Panganiban acknowledged that these employees would not just work as street sweepers or janitors, noting that such a scenario would lead to the related problem of underemployment.

He said they could instead take advantage of livelihood opportunities available in the agencies. But they could also develop new skills in areas such as entrepreneurship.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

MERALCO Shares of the Land Bank of the Philippines

The public is once again put on notice that LANDBANK remains the owner of the 42,002,750 shares of stock in MERALCO which were transferred to Josefina S. Lubrica on November 28, 2008 on the basis of the Order of the former DAR Regional Adjudicator Conchita C. Minas dated October 30, 2008 and the Demand to Comply dated November 3, 2008 issued by the Sheriffs of Adjudicator Minas.

The new DAR Regional Adjudicator Marivic C. Casabar has already recalled and withdrawn the Order of Adjudicator Minas and declared it and all actions taken pursuant thereto as illegal, and therefore null and void, pursuant to her Order issued on December 15, 2008. Adjudicator Casabar has also directed MERALCO to cancel the stock certificates issued to Josefina S. Lubrica and restore the ownership of LANDBANK over the 42,002,750 shares of stock in an Order issued on December 17, 2008.

The public is therefore once more warned that any sale, transfer, assignment or conveyance of LANDBANK's shares of stock in MERALCO, whether in the name of LANDBANK, Josefina S. Lubrica or any of her transferee or assignee, is null and void.

LANDBANK

UP loans office offers lifeline to students

By Julia Pl. Aurelio

ENDING ENROLLMENT SYNdrome short on cash flock to a cramped office in Vinzons Hall at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, to seek help in paying their tuition.

With the recent tuition increases that jacked up fees to P1,000 per unit, UP students now have more reason to apply for short-term loans that they can pay within a semester.

"It's really an assistance program for students. Its purpose is not to earn, but to help those who cannot pay their school dues," said Jocelyn Abecia of the Student Loan Board (SLB).

In applying for a loan, be it for tuition or cash, a student is required to have a guarantor, or cosigner.

Students may borrow up to 70 percent of their total assessed fees for a semester. They are required to pay the loan within the semester, or they will not be allowed to take final examinations or apply for another loan.

P5,000 deduction

"If a student does not pay up, it will be the [guarantor-employee] who will pay the loan. From his salary. But we always consider that his salary is really small, so we deduct it in installments," said Abecia, a former staff member of UP's Human Resources and Development Office.

Abecia said then UP justice Milflor Zamora had offered to guarantee many student loans, and that most of those loans were settled with the SLB. (See story on Page A3.)

"It's not true that his retirement pay was auctioned because of the unpaid student loans. In actuality, only one item was unable to pay and so deducted around P5,000 from him," she pointed out.

Abecia said that if Zamora's retirement pay was reduced to such a small amount, it could have been due to other loans that he made during his employment.

She said Zamora's sick leaves could have been used up because of half-days, tardiness and other factors.

Amnesty

She also brought up the possibility that Zamora had forgotten having his unused sick leaves converted to cash in the past.

Recently, the SLB granted amnesty to guarantors whose students were unable to settle their loans.

Abecia said the amnesty covered loans made from the mid-1990s to 2007.

She declined to say how many students Zamora had guaranteed, saying such details were confidential.

"But in any case, he is still a good person because he accommodated the request of the students," Abecia said.

Little big man on campus gets 92 cents on retirement

PAYBACK TIME UP students whose loans were guaranteed by justice Milflor Zamora hold a benefit party on Saturday organized by his grateful benefactors who say that it's not really a fund-raising event as it is to thank really good man. DANIEL

Zamora wrote the Civil Service Commissioners in 2006 for assistance, pointing out that a utility worker like himself would not have received a total of 12 commendations from the state university if he was always on leave. But those years up imply from that agency's chief.

According to Zamora, he did have suits of his job leaves converted to cash while he was working at UP. But he said he was certain that those were not the contested 581 days.

Singing at work

Mr. Zamora said the family wanted the matter finally resolved for their "Tito."

She said it had been a tiring and painful battle for money that her father deserved, especially considering his dedication to his job and his devotion to UP faculty, staff and students, particularly at the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy.

At the CSSP housed in the university's Palma Hall, Zamora was popular as the janitor who sang while he worked (this is, in fact, based on among the things in house as a CSSP Freshman

Payback

Zamora said he could no longer recall how many student loans he had signed as guarantor, which allowed them to advance to graduate.

(Ironically, only two of his six children were able to acquire college degrees. He could not afford to put them through school.)

By his account, he began guaranteeing student loans in 1974 as his main "payback" to the kindness shown by a Professor Reyes of the Department of Speech and Drama.

"One day, she praised me for making the classroom very clean. But to me it wasn't. I knew it was dirty and it was her way of telling me to do my job. The next day and the days after that, I made sure that all the seats [I was assigned] to were always clean," he said.

In December of that year, Professor Reyes called Zamora in Room 130, where he found food, clothes and other things, including envelopes with money piled on a table.

It was all his, he recalled being told. He learned that the professor had asked his students to pitch in for a Christmas gift for him, as a gesture of thanks for keeping their classrooms clean.

From then on, he said, he made sure to show small acts of kindness to others.

But even earlier, during the First Quarter Storm, Zamora proved himself an ally of students.

"I helped them put up the barricades on the streets using benches. I remember [military] helicopters hovering over us and roaming with the students when Malacañan bombs exploded," he said, chuckling at the memory.

Much later, he would become a working billboard during the UP Student Council election campaign.

He told Francis Dongallano (now a senator) and Mike Defensor (formerly President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff) were among the students who joined their campaign paraphernalia on him.

First meeting

In her e-mail, Mike Rivera, now a marketing manager, said she met Zamora in 1991. She was sitting on the steps of Dilimán Hall, disgruntled that no one would sign her student loan application.

While Rivera: "Hong Hui, with a map in hand, approached me and asked me why I was crying. I told him I had to graduate but my student loan and still probably not be able to enroll this semester. I had no hopes that he would be able to help me. After all, he was just a janitor. He borrowed my loan application, took a small amount, and returned it to me the next day. I was so happy and relieved that I was able to graduate."

Recently, the SLB granted amnesty to guarantors whose students were unable to settle their loans.

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"But in any case, he is still a good person because he accommodated the request of the students," Abecia said.

Thank you party

On the phone with the Inquirer, Rivera said she sense she would remember it only for her friends and fellow UP graduates.

She said she never expected it to elicit that much attention, including from a group of UP alumni in the United States who expressed interest in putting up a fund fund for Zamora.

Rivera and Zamora were scheduled to meet last night for the first time since she went the e-mail.

The occasion? A benefit party that she and her friends organized at Tambayan, a new haunt in Katipunan, Quezon City.

Rivera said the party was not so much an "official fund-raising activity" for Zamora as a chance to thank the man who helped a number of students when they needed it most.

"At times we ask ourselves if there are really good people on earth. Meeting Hong Hui, I'd say yes. There's still goodness to this world," Rivera said.

Puno gains more backing

Front page A1

spokesperson Mikia Marquez, who was at the same forum, told reporters that in his opinion, Puno was unlikely to seek the presidency.

Marquez said that from his conversations with the Chief Justice, he could see that the latter was not interested in joining the executive branch or entering the world of politics.

It was shortly after talk of a planned move to impeach Puno surfaced that calls were stived for him to run for president in the May 2010 polls, a move month his term as Chief Justice ends.

But he has remained cold to the idea.

Nationwide campaign

Tayag said the gathering of signatures had started in urban centers and would move on to other places.

He said the campaign would be nationwide and was being linked by the help of non-government organizations, including the Guardians and the Masons.

"Everywhere we go, people from all sectors of our society have enthusiastically affixed their signatures to the petition endorsing ... Chief Justice Puno as a Filipino candidate for president of the Philippines. Thousands have signified their intention to sign the petition," Tayag said in a statement.

He said in a brief interview that many had signed the petition except that he could not recall the exact number at the moment.

Asked if he thought Puno would heed his campaign, Tayag said the Chief Justice would decide on the matter as the proper time.

"We are very confident that the Chief Justice is sensitive ... to recognize something higher than the Supreme Court, [which is] the people. If they see the men who will enforce [him] ... I think the Chief Justice will decide when the time is proper for him to make a decision," Tayag said.

Earlier, the Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya, which has academics and Catholic bishops among its members, called on Puno to lead a caretaker government. The group made the call on the eve of outgoing President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation.

But Puno rejected the call, saying he would rather remain in the judiciary.

He also said the judiciary should be spared from political talk because it was handling cases with political dimensions.

Alternative leadership

Tayag said he had also formed the Ayaw Ko Nga! Movement-Alternative Leadership for Philippine Society.

The movement is intended to promote the search for leaders with the proper values to replace those who are merely advancing their own interests.

Tayag said he had known Puno since their days as student leaders at the University of the Philippines, where the latter was also the editor of the UP newspaper Philippine Collegian.

"He's been consistent in maintaining his moral integrity," Tayag said. "He can't be classified as a pupu, one whose heart is selfish appearances."

Tayag said his group wanted Puno as President, "to prove that we are not 80 million Filipinos mind by one despot."

"For the first time, we will be represented by ... a principled person," he said.

Scandal of disunity

Elsewhere, leaders of various Christian churches took up the Chief Justice's challenge for the "moral force" to be more proactive, and vowed to work harder to "banish the scandal of disunity" in the country.

Several Christian denominations under the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP) yesterday converged at the Manila headquarters of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to mark the annual "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity."

The NCCP chair, Bishop Nathanael Lazaro of the Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas, and the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Ecumenism Affairs chair, Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias, said they agreed with Puno's call that religious leaders had to take an active role in arresting moral decadence.

The other churches that comprise the NCCP are the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, Iglesia Unida Hesucristiana, Lutheran Church in the Philippines, The Salvation Army, United Methodist Church and United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

Lazaro said it was high time for Church leaders to "roll their sleeves and work together."

"Stepping down is not our thing. If this is so, could the destiny of our people also be in our hands? I believe so," he said.

Tobias said the times called for younger ecumenical among Church leaders.

"We should really heed Chief Justice Puno's call for us to work together [as of moral force]," he said, adding that the country's social and political problems could also indicate that religious leaders had failed to improve morality among their followers.

Every year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is held on Jan. 18-25 to promote dialogue among various Christian churches.

More expressions of support

In Los Baños, Laguna, the brothers Tagalog chapter of the Bagong Mgamayang Makabayan (Bayan-BT) said it was backing Puno in reaction to talk that moves for his candidacy were afoot.

Bayan-ST deputy secretary general Christine Macabenlos said other militant groups in the region were behind Puno in his call for morality in the government.

Macabenlos said that if it were true that Puno's impeachment move was being planned, Bayan-ST would conduct campaigns in support of him.

She said protest actions would be held in schools, communities, factories and farmlands.

A group calling itself the Artists' Response to the Call for Social Change and Transformation [or Artists' Arena] also expressed its full support for the Chief Justice.

In a statement, the group said Puno had "contributed a reputation as a highly competent and independent minded jurist."

"He has always been able to transcend [political] sectarianism and factious rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, in contrast to the pro-foreign and anti-democratic stance of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," it said. With reports from Jenny Montemayor, Madelaine Nieves Caplan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Peta: In Year of Ox, get meat off plates

By Tina G. Santos

AS PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD PREPARE to ring in the Chinese Year of the Ox, an animal rights group yesterday called on everyone to lessen meat and dairy products on their plates.

"Cows are intelligent, sensitive animals with complex personalities, but the meat and dairy industries treat them as nothing more than walking sources and milk machines," according to the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta).

They are routinely branded, dehorned and castrated without anesthetic. Cows on dairy farms are kept constantly pregnant, have their babies repeatedly ripped away from them, and are forced to produce 10 times more milk than they naturally would before being slaughtered and ground up for hamburger," Peta said.

It added: "Slaughterhouse workers sometimes resort to stomping, beating, stabbing, shooting and dismembering fully conscious animals in order to keep production lines moving."

"As the Year of Ox approaches, what better way to celebrate these gentle, intelligent animals than by making a resolution to leave them off of your plates?" said Peta India Chief Kirtu Antin Baker.

"Abundant tofu, healthy vegan alternatives to beef and dairy products make it easy to make it a year for everyone to celebrate," he said.

Peta also shared these facts about cows:

• According to the Chinese zodiac, people born in the Year of the Ox possess the ox's qualities of unyielding honesty, strength, intuition to detail, dogmal, ability, and ability to draw attention to broadcasted bodily.

• Cows can, Each cow can weigh as more than 150 members of the herd, and social relationships are very important to them. When separated from their families, friends, or herds, cows become depressed, eat less, give less milk, and show other signs of distress.

• Cows have their calves. Mother cows have been known to follow for their babies and travel for miles to reunite with calves that have been sold to veal farms.

• Cows have "families" members. Researchers have found that cows not only figure out problems, but they also value the intellectual challenge and get excited when they find solutions.

• Cows are intelligent. Research has shown that cows clearly understand cause and effect relationships—a sign of advanced cognitive abilities. Much like humans, cows form lasting bonds with one another, and have the capacity to worry about the future.

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Jan. 20 ● Democrat Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton embrace after their first one-on-one debate ahead of almost two dozen primary contests in their history-making battle that would make one of them the first black President or the first female President of the United States

Feb. 3 ● Speaker Jose de Venecia delivers a privilege speech denouncing President Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, just hours before De Venecia was mobbed in a Palace-instigated House coup that ousted Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles as his

Feb. 1 ● MSN-ZTE scandal key witness Jun Lozada breaks down as a dramatic press conference at the La Salle Greenhills after his deliverance from police agents whom he accused of trying to kidnap him on his arrival from Hong Kong the night before

Feb. 25 ● Former President Cory Aquino flashes her trademark Laban sign during a Mass at the Basilican Church to commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the first Edsa People Power Revolution of 1986

June 28 ● A victorious Manny Pacquiao celebrates another comeback, this time against World Boxing Council lightweight titleholder David Diaz at the 9th round of their fight at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas. Pacquiao gave the Filipino champion his fourth crown and many weight divisions

June 15 ● An exhausted but vastly relieved ABS-CBN television anchor Ces Drilon is met in Cavite by students, family, fans, after being freed following nine days of captivity by Abu Abu Sayyaf in Jolo. Drilon and her camera crew had gone to Jolo to interview Abu Sayyaf leader when they were kidnapped by a group of armed men on June 8.

June 25 ● Overturned hull of the sunken Petrovic II of the Black in the Sibuyan Sea about 9 a.m. US Navy helicopter and Philippine Coast Guard vessels bringing rescuers and divers to the site of the wreck of Sibuyan Island in Romblon. The 23,816-ton ferry capsized at the height of a storm on June 21. Of the 862 passengers and crew, only 57 survived and 569 bodies were recovered.

July 22 ● The huge crane hall of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, which finally began partial operations at 3 a.m. on July 22 with a limited number of domestic flights after being mothballed for six years because of an ownership dispute

Aug. 1 ● Court of Appeals Associate Justice Jose Sabio Jr. calls a press conference to deny that he had asked for a P10-million bribe in exchange for removing himself from the Mendiola RTC case to ought before the appellate court. Sabio earlier reported to Presiding Justice Conrado Vasquez Jr. that a businessman willing to provide for Manalo's bail made a P10-million bribe offer to him.

Aug. 3 ● Accused of [illegible] the distribution of 2008 Olympic Games and arranged accou

Sept. 15 ● A row of people can be seen through the storefront of the Lehman Brothers building in New York today the key venture investment bank filed for bankruptcy, becoming the largest and highest-profile casualty of the global financial crisis, and setting off a domino-like fall of stock markets around the world

Manny P
Filipino o

From page A1

every court, came in second.

(Last year, after convening an extraordinary summit to respond to the crisis in international lettings, Pinoy ended a fighting second to Pennsylvania's Bobby "Knocking Bid" Pinkilo.)

Other nominees this year are new Commission on Human Rights Chair **Leila de Lima**, radio-host-turned-crusader **Jess Palpilot**, international child singer **Charice Pempengco**—and two political symbols of the country's struggle with modernity—the Overseas Filipino Worker (the honoree in 1994, back when he was known as the Overseas Contract Worker), the **Whistle-Blower**, independent filmmaker **Lav Diaz** and reality Olympic gold medalist **Milky Wong**.

A class fight

Since November 2003, Pacquiao has fought 12 million-dollar matches, losing only once. Since that last defeat in March 2005, Pacquiao has won nine straight, a remarkable streak made even more noteworthy by the quality of his opponents. Five of his last nine victories have come at the expense of other current Hall of Famers like Juan Manuel Marquez and Erik Morales, a second triumph over Barrera and his 2008 win each against Juan Manuel Marquez and boxing superstar Oscar de la Hoya.

The Marquez fight, on March 15, was an economic close one, as his famous coach Freddie Roach keenly admitted after the fight. It could have gone either way. That in the end it would be Pacquiao to both points for and proof of the Filipino icon's evolution as a boxer.

The bout was the highly anticipated sequel to one of Pacquiao's most controversial fights, in May 2004, when after knocking Marquez down three times in the first round he and the Mexican master battled to a draw.

Controversy was hedge-vowed in scoring that first round.)

The rematch was a closely fought as the original fight. But in the end, what spelled the difference was Pacquiao's explosive power. He scored a knockdown in the third round, allowing him to win the World Boxing Council super featherweight title via a split decision. It is worth noting that for super featherweight or junior lightweight division is the same weight class that the world famous Gabriel "Flash" Elorde dom-

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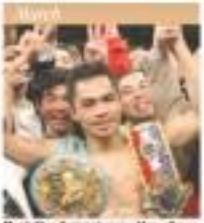

March 15 ● Boxing champion Manny Pacquiao fought a tough 12-round fight before defrocking Mexican World Boxing Council super featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez, in a split decision at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. With the victory, Pacquiao became the first Asian to hold four world crowns in three different divisions—flyweight, super bantamweight and super featherweight—in the WBC.

April 16 ● Luisary Isasaweth clutches the bag of rice that she is allowed to buy after queuing for hours at the crowded field at a state-subsidized buying center on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. A surge in the international price of the staple created a temporary supply crisis in the Philippines which is the world's largest importer of rice.

May 15 ● A woman saves a boy from a collapsed building a day after a 7.9-mag tshdo ed'thquake hit Sichuan and neighboring provinces of China on May 12. More than 11,000 people died and thousands were reclaimed trapped beneath tonnes and slabs of concrete days after the worst earthquake to have hit China in three decades.

May 16 ● A body is taken out of the Cabuyao, Laguna, branch of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. where gunmen killed nine people, an act of-style, in one of the bloodiest bank robberies in the country's history.

May 25 ● A frail-looking former President Cory Aquino attends Mass at the Don Bosco Oratorio Makati, one of the many healing Masses offered for her since her family announced that she had been diagnosed with colon cancer in March.

May 28 ● About 30,000 mourners and supporters shower confetti on the casket carrying the remains of party-list legislator Crispin Beltran as the funeral cortege made its way to the Angat of Meadows Memorial and Nature Park in Angat, Bulacan. Beltran died on May 29 after he fell from the roof of his house that he was repairing.

May 29 ● Hostage-taker Rey Dgo (second from right) keeps watch over the women passengers he is holding hostage as police negotiator (partly hidden) cries to talk to him, after a five-hour stand-off in a stretch of highway in Lubao, Pampanga. Dgo was shot dead by police but not before he had fatally shot one passenger.

Aug. 19 ● The Supreme Court on late hears oral arguments on the proposed Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain between the government and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The high court rejected the provisional agreement that would have given the Moro rebels authority over an expanded autonomous region for Muslims in Mindanao for being "patently illegal and/or poorly framed."

Oct. 8 ● Health Secretary Francisco Duque III holds up on one hand a sample of contaminated milk from China and on the other a list of 21 brands of tainted milk powder from China that tested positive for melamine. Reports that milk products containing melamine—an industrial chemical that is used to make milk products appear to contain more protein than they actually do—had killed at least four children and sickened 54,000 others and prompted a worldwide recall of milk products from China.

Oct. 21 ● Roland Jimmy Gil Vari Filipino de la Paz returns from Moscow to face a media scandal and Senate investigation. The former Philippine Ambassador to Russia was detained at the Moscow airport after he was found to be carrying evidence of the $3,000 bribe. De la Paz, who acted as the fundraising officer for a police delegation that went to Moscow for an alleged conference, said he took the P6.3 million from the PNP as a "standby revolving fund" for the group.

Oct. 29 ● Former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante is taken by ambulance to the St. Luke's Medical Center in south-side on his arrival in Manila after being extradited from the United States to face a congressional probe into the alleged bribes-fund scam. Bolante was accused of being the "architect" of the alleged scam that allegedly diverted P728 million in fertilizer funds for farmers into the 2004 election campaigns of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Nov. 4 ● Barack Obama, the 47-year-old Illinois senator, swept away the last racial barrier in American politics to become the first black US Presidential candidate of a historic victory over Republican John McCain.

Nov. 11 ● Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, a known ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, became Senate President after Sen. Manuel Villar was ousted as a Senate coup. The two senators, including Villar's potential rivals for the presidency in 2010, supported the senior move which is thought to have been touched off by the U-turn on impeachment controversy. Sen. Gregorio Honasan, a cashiered colonel and former aide to Enrile, administers the oath to the new Senate President.

Nov. 27 ● Smoke billows out of the landmark Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai, India, one of the targets of coordinated attacks by teams of militant gunmen which killed up to 100 people and wounded more than 300.

acquiao:
f the Year

(voted for some seven years.)

A boxing clinic

Pacquiao's second match of the year, on June 28, inspired him to fight at the higher lightweight division, in normal use to be a massive class to boxing.

Despite the gallant round of the defending champion, David Diaz, Pacquiao methodically broke his opponent apart with his combination of raw power and calculation. He won the WBC lightweight title with a controlled 9th-round technical knockout.

The third fight of the year, on Dec. 6, forced Pacquiao to bulk up to weight again, for the right to meet De la Hoya, boxing's "Golden Boy" whose fighting flair and marketing savvy helped draw millions of boxing fans, especially in the 1990s. Of all Pacquiao's opponents, he was the most famous. Even Filipinos not familiar with boxing knew De la Hoya, the man who "moved" boxing.

But on fight night, Pacquiao quickly cut through the De la Hoya hype, winning every single round from the opening bell with quick one-two combinations and clambering speed.

De la Hoya, a proud man humbled for the day, frozen in the crowd after the 8th round, in pandemonium inside the arena in Las Vegas and general euphoria in the Philippines. The underdog from General Santos City had beaten boxing's best-known champion.

A great victory

Criticism has since surfaced of the De la Hoya match, arguing that it was not a great fight: only patriotic sentiments, the argument goes, stand to the way of most Filipinos seeing the fight as essentially a mismatch. But the critics misunderstand the manner we naively of boxing but of all competition. There are great fights, and then there are great victories.

Pacquiao's complete destruction of De la Hoya, over the world's most popular boxer and a 13-time world champion, was one such victory.

The emphatic triumph confirmed Pacquiao's status as the best pound-for-pound boxer in the world; the disciplined win proved that Pacquiao had indeed developed into a complete boxer; the decisive space (and his gallant sentiments of the boxing icon, during the fight and after it) heralded the arrival of the country's new superstar.

As an incisive boxing analyst wrote afterward: Now it is Pacquiao's turn to own boxing.

Dec. 1 and 13 ● Boxing champion Manny Pacquiao comes home to a motorcade and crowds of cheering fans celebrating his conquest of boxing's "Golden Boy," Oscar de la Hoya, in the biggest victory of his career. Pacquiao hammered out an 8th round technical knockout victory in the fight that was staged at the MGM Grand's Garden Arena in Las Vegas on Dec. 7.

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OPINION

Red Cross under fire

EDITORIAL

LAST THURSDAY, AS ANDREAS NOTTER, A 39-year-old Swiss in charge of the International Committee of the Red Cross' office in Zamboanga, Eugenio Vagni, a 42-year-old Italian water and sanitation engineer, and Mary Jean Lacaba, a 37-year-old Filipina field officer made their way in the provincial capitol after having just concluded the inspection of a prison for a possible water project, they were abducted by armed men on motorcycles.

The kidnappers also robbed three Filipinos—medical officer Dr. Richie Bonilla, senior field officer Ramon Cancuran and field officer Mohamad Shiluna Jikiri—but didn't abduct them. The Swiss, Italian and Filipina, however, were whisked away from Datiloi by the armed men who commandeered their Red Cross vehicle.

Two hours after the abduction, the Red Cross vehicle was recovered in the village of Bangaran by the authorities. The hunt is on. The military and the police are not only deeply engaged, they have called in American special forces to render assistance. The authorities say the abducted Red Cross workers were initially brought to Talipao. This town, the armed forces claim, is a stronghold of Abu Sayyaf leader Albader Parad.

The gunmen—one of whom police authorities say is a dismissed Parañaque jail guard (a former jail warden in Parañaque is also under investigation, João Mayor Andre Hussin claims)—are according to the police, "known followers" of Parad and another Abu Sayyaf member, Sulaiman Pasah. The two, again according to the police, took custody of the abducted Red Cross workers. The police point to the modus operandi of "kidnap entrepreneurism" who abduct civilians, then give their victims to another group that subsequently pass them on to another, then to another, and so on, as the corresponding ransom for their release increases.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is being more circumspect. While the police seem convinced the Abu Sayyaf are the ringleaders, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro says it's too early in any for sure; but the abductors will be "hunted down." Government officials, both national and local, are understandably outraged by the abductions, and Moro officials in particular have been vocal about how the kidnappings are doing great harm to the reputation and wellbeing of the country and their province.

But it is troubling to note that local officials have been quick to announce they aren't inclined to intervene and help the authorities determine who the abductors are, much less initiate contact with them, because the local officials might end up under arrest.

The police's immediate imputation of guilt on the Abu Sayyaf and the armed forces' declaration that they will hunt down the kidnappers come as a lot of puzzling: that shouldn't serve to obscure the obvious impunity with which kidnappers can abduct people in the area.

The world media reported the abductions as the worst hostage-taking of foreigners since 2001. That is true. But the abductions also represent the most brazen assault against humanitarian workers in Muslim Mindanao. The question that needs to be asked now is whether this is an incident isolated in its lunacy, or part of an evolving metric of assaulting humanitarian workers. According to CNN, last month a UN truck carrying food supplies was attacked, leaving the driver's assistant dead.

None causes this abduction. Both the UN and Red Cross have traditionally enjoyed the respect of even the most ideologically-driven domestic rebel groups. We can only hope rebels aren't out to target humanitarian workers. In the meantime we must confront the possibility that kidnapping syndicates have decided that foreign humanitarian workers are easy pickings.

If this is so, it will have an effect on domestic humanitarian workers, particularly as the emerging presidential candidacy of the current Red Cross chair, Richard Gordon, might provide a pretext for such syndicates to think Red Cross workers are actually campaign workers—and so, subject to the "usual" election related violence and intimidation.

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Concurring only in the result

SEPARATE OPINION

Augusto A. Cruz

THERE IS NOW A SERIOUS MOVEMENT TO impeach Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno for his refusal to promulgate a decision against a sitting member of the House of Representatives on the ground of non-citizenship. The sketchy reports from the media say it was animosity recently voiced inside Ruben Reyes and concurred in without qualification by three or five members of the Supreme Court, with the rest of the justices concurring only in the result.

The threat to impeach Puno has more barb than bite. What is more believable is the suspicion that it has been initiated to remove the chief justice because of his known opposition to the administration's oft-debated Cha-cha schemes and replace him with someone more sympathetic to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's drives of perpetuating herself in their power, like it again involving the supposedly spelled-out judiciary with the least machination of her cohorts against a recalcitrant point, no less than the chief justice himself, to insure her quest for her second glorification.

I believe the chief's reason for not granting the so-called decision is based on Art. VIII, Sec. 14 of the Constitution, which says:

"No decision shall be rendered by any court without expressing therein clearly and distinctly the facts and the law on which it is based.

"No petition for review or motion for reconsideration of a decision of the court shall be refused due course or denied without stating the legal basis therefor."

This provision is a reinvention of the original rule included in the Commonwealth Constitution to further strengthen the right to notice and hearing guaranteed by the due process clause. It is intended to prevent the court from ruling on any case by simply holding, without more, "Judgment is hereby rendered in favor of [case] against [." Such administrative is unfamiliar under the Bill of Rights. The parties are entitled to know how a decision has been reached and to appeal from it if it is premised. This would not be possible if the pertinent facts and the applicable laws are not examined and resolved to support the reasoned decision.

The above-quoted provision was not observed in the Reyes promises that Chief Justice Puno has not promulgated to date. He is correct in refusing to do so because it is not supported by the majority vote required by the Constitution. Decisions of the Supreme Court are basic require the conformity of at least eight of the 15 members, which was not reached in the case under consideration. (The singular exception is where a quorum of only eight defaults exists on a constitutional question that can be decided by only five of them, but that is another story.)

The seven accounts say that nine justices concurred with the Reyes promises only "in the result," with the other five or three members concurring without any reservation and thus agreeing with the facts and the law on which it was based. That there were only four or at most only six of them and so they could not constitute the majority of the Court to make a valid and binding decision.

As for the other nine justices, what they concurred in was only in the result, which means they did not agree with the facts and the law approved in the promises.

The result they were supporting had no facts at all and was therefore an empty gesture. Unlike the justices who merely concurred and thereby indicated their full agreement with the facts and the law that supported the result, the nine justices who concurred only in the result rejected the factual and legal basis discussed in the Reyes ponencia. In effect, they agreed with its dispositive portion but did not say why. Their votes were clearly invalid for not complying with the requirements of Art. VIII, Sec. 14, of the Constitution.

I think those who concurred with Justice Reyes but only in the result did so out of compulsion to vote with their colleagues or agreement with the writer in the case. But they could not accept their reasons given for surrendering her, which is why they could not concur with the promises in full without any ifs or buts. Chief Justice Puno was correct in refusing to pronounce the so-called decision as it was supported by only a minority of the Court.

This is only my own personal opinion, and the chief may have his own legal justifications, but in any case, the move to impeach him for his perfectly valid stand is making a monstrum out of a mistfold. The members of the lower House would again demonstrate their ignorance of the Constitution by plotting against the innocent Chief Justice Puno instead of impeaching, not him, but their sexyed Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for her many unconstitutional sins.

I conclude with recollection of a similar case but with a different ending. In Pirallo v. Commission on Elections, 257 SCRA 707, the Supreme Court finally upheld the petitioner, to who was more of a sentimental silver than a judicial luminary, by reversing established decisions in three earlier cases against him. Only five justices concurred completely, four agreed per his vote (only for that particular case), three in the result, one dissented, and two did not take part. The lone dissenter was Hilario G. Davide Jr. who later became chief justice in his own time.

* * *

PHILIPPINE DVD CONTINUAL MOMENT: In the 1950s, when the Divine Word Missionaries announced their intention—and actually started—to admit Filipino candidates to the congregation, a lot of prejudices and negative reactions came from the older confreres who said: "Serve one great purpose" (It must be a big joke!) "Start there; the soul of the Iwa DDs in the Philippines for loyal vocations, particularly that of St. Arnold Janssen, has, paid off. Now the SVD is one of the biggest congregations in the Philippines, with three provinces, and with 140 Filipino SVD missionaries working in about 40 countries worldwide.

* * *

Today, Feast of the Sto. Niño, let us all be reminded that we were children once, innocent, helpless, pure, joyful, trusting and hopeful. As we grow on and grow older, may we not become too burdened by the cares of this world, forgetting that we have a father who cares for us and who is in control. May we not fall into the "sin of adultery," not so much in the sense of the sixth commandment, but in the sense that we "adulterate" life itself.

Let not fear and pride deprive us of the spontaneity, joy and openness of a child.

* * *

Iesu's let this day end without embracing or saying something nice to a child, brother, sister, and whatever help or assistance to as many suffering children around. Much better still, go home to God's heart, and promise the Father to live a better life.

* * *

Ramiro Miranda invites you to a lay forum on how to build up your body resistance. The forum will be held on Jan. 24, 2009 at Ateneo Hall, Christ the King Seminary, S. Rodriguez St. Ave, Quezon City from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Re inquiries, call 373 2262 or 09174107949.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to be little, and not to babble the "little" ones. Amen.

The 'little' ones

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A YOUNG BOY who was not doing good in school. His parents tried to help and motivate him, but nothing worked. They put him out of public school and enrolled him in a Catholic school. Soon after, they noticed a change in his study habits and now a concentrated look on his face. After six months, he surprised them with his high grades. When his parents asked him how he did it, the young boy replied: "On the first day of school, when I walked through the front door and saw a guy nailed to the cross, I knew those people were serious about getting very good grades."

* * *

Today is the Feast of the Sto. Niño. In today's gospel (Mk. 10, 13-16), Jesus reminds us that whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it. In one sweet sentence He specifies how the children, considered then as "persons of no-city significance," by embracing them and blessing them. How do we treat the children in this our present day and time? Do we give them priority and importance, or do we belittle the little ones? In our decisions and actions as adults, do we take into consideration the good and the future of the children?

* * *

Last weekend, I facilitated a recollection for a group of graduates of Mary Ridge School in Tagaytay City. As I listened to the "sharing" of the "girls" who are now in their 20s, I realized what I learned in my 18 years of ministry of facet of parents or their children, which could be positive or negative. A lot of them shared the wounds they received from their parents when they were children, and how they suffered then, and even now because of the lack of their parents failed, or even refused to love them. But what amazed me more was the healing power of love and forgiveness, especially the power of God's love that can melt and heal the hardest of hearts.

* * *

A bit has been said and can be said of former President "Erap" Estrada, but one thing that should be said of him is his exemplary

Blind love and devotion to his mother Doña Mary, who passed away recently at the blessed age of 103. Love begets love. As we salute Doña Mary, we salute all mothers today, women who have suffered countless, who go through untold sacrifices, for the sake of their children.

* * *

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel that the kingdom of God belongs to the little ones. May I remind our government leaders and officials that the Philippines belongs to the little ones. Our country does not belong to those in power, neither does it belong to the few rich and the influential. Something is basically wrong when a select few (God our country as if it were their family company) so severe, as if it were their own turf, making of us their willing cows.

* * *

Please make sure there is still a future for the children, for those who are obsessed with making money and making more money, as Jeremiah Belo did Cruz Initiate saying: "Today after the last tree has been cut, only after the last river has been poisoned, only after the last fish has been caught, only then will you find that money cannot be eaten."

* * *

In line with our Philippine SVD Centennial celebrations, Fr. Pale Tegana, SVD, rector of Christ the King Seminary, led the planting of 100 trees on the occasion of Saint Arnold Janssen's feast day, and also Father Pale's birthday! Have you ever planted a tree? A tree will live on long after you and I are gone. Leave something behind to benefit mankind. Perhaps a work of art, a life-story, a good child, or just a tree.

Political terrorism

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

TOMORROW, JAN. 11, CONGRESS WILL RESUME its session amid talk that an impeachment complaint would be filed against Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno for allegedly withholding the promulgation of a decision, penned by Justice Ruben T. Reyes, naming Justice Ty Lindambong Asuncion complete stranger. I believe that, for itself, this withholding cannot be considered a ground for impeachment.

CJ not personally liable. First, in its Resolution dated Dec. 18, 2008, the Supreme Court ruled, "Since nine (9) Justices, not counting the Chief Justice, would concur only in the result, the Antiboy amendatory decision to withhold the promulgation of the ponencia of Justice Reyes. It was noted that if a majority concurs only in the result,' the ponencia has no doctrinal value. More importantly, any decision sending a sitting member of the House of Representatives should spell out clearly the legal basis relied upon by the majority and not merely a separate statement." (Italics supplied)

Plainly then, if even the Court itself, not the Chief Justice, has withheld the promulgation. Some, including me, may—with due respect—disagree with the Court's two reasons (and even with the majority's ruling), but I cannot consider The Constitution does not require "doctrinal value" to render a judgment. Neither does it demand such value in issuing a writ. Indeed, there are many decisions that do not lay down doctrines. Nonetheless, the function of the Court is not to make political body counts but to apply the law.

Second, I believe that the subject decision is unconstitutional, not because it lacks doctrinal value (but because it violates Sec. 14 of Article VI, 1 of the Constitution that states, "No decision shall be rendered by any court without stating clearly the facts and the law on which it is based." (*Sky Wide Ind. Sales Corp. v. Intelsat*, G.R. No. 158884, Feb. 28, 2008). A cursory reading of the facts and law in which it is based ("

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2009

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to
jamesdeen@inquirer.com.ph

Cities Juan F. Sarmiento Jr.

GAZA CONFLICT

GAZA STRIP FAST FACTS

Area: 360 sq km (approximately 40 km long and 10 km wide)
Population: 1.5 million, many of whom are refugees of the land that became Israel in 1948. Roughly a third of the Gaza population lives in refugee camps funded by the United Nations.
Religion: Muslim (predominantly Sunni), 99.3 percent; Christian, 0.7 percent

A PALESTINIAN woman reacts to an Israeli air strike in Rafah on Jan. 12.

Philistia: Gaza and the coastal towns to its north, for most of the years between 1250 BC and AD 135—the era in which Jews lived in and often ruled the land of Israel—divided this Israelite or Judean control.

An intriguing Gaza was part of biblical Pleshet or Philistia—the domain of the Philistines, a non-Semitic "sea people" hailing from the Aegean region, who probably invaded and settled along the coast in the 12th century BC (many or less simultaneous with the arrival in the Holy Land of the Hebrews from the east).

Samson and Delilah: From Gaza, Ashkelon and Jaffa, the Philistines controlled the coastal plain to 1150 BC. Samson and Delilah supposedly met in Gaza around that time.

The rule lasted until 586 BC, when Philistia was conquered (along with Judea) by the Babylonians and the Philistines were ended and vanished from history. In the second century AD, after having quashed a Jewish revolt, the Roman rulers renamed the land of Israel—in order to tie Judaism to...Palestine (a destructive of Philistia).

They thus gave the Arabs, who were to arrive nearly seven centuries later, an entirely wrong impression of the name they were to adopt.

Zionist immigration: Palestinian Arabs, Christians and Jews harmoniously lived in Palestine for centuries. But in the late 1800s, a group in Europe, known as "Zionists," decided to go to Palestine to create a Jewish homeland.

Initially, the immigration of Jewish and non-Jewish Europeans to Palestine following the Holocaust, the indigenous Arab population became increasingly alienated and dismayed. Eventually, fighting erupted between the two groups.

Jewish state: In 1947, the United Nations decided to intervene. The UN set aside 55 percent of Palestine for a Jewish state—although the Jews represented only about 30 percent of the total population and owned less than 7 percent of the land.

By the end of the 1948 war, the Jewish state—having declared itself "Israel"—had conquered 78 percent of Palestine—far more than that proposed by the UN partition plan. As a result, three-quarters of a million Palestinians had been made refugees.

1967 and 1973 wars: At war that were not incorporated into Israel became part of neighboring countries. Jordan took over the control of the West Bank and Egypt administered the Gaza Strip.

In 1967, following the Six Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Palestinians were again forced to leave the area. Israel also occupied the Sinai and the Golan Heights.

In 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the holiest day of the Jewish year. In the wars caused the fall of hardly, Israel later returned the Sinai to Egypt, but annexed the Golan Heights.

Greater Israel: Devout Jews believe that Gaza and the West Bank were God-given and that it is their mission to live there as part of Greater Israel, the extension of the state of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. However, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have set control to set up an independent rule.

Oslo accords, intifada: Open revolt broke out with the first intifada (uprising) in 1987. The Oslo accords, which sought to make the West Bank and Gaza parts of a Palestinian state, were signed in Washington D.C. in 1993, but these did not please hard-line Israelis and Palestinians.

The second intifada broke out in 2000. Much of 2001, 2002 and early 2003 saw an escalation of violence by Palestinian suicide bombers and the military reoccupation of the West Bank by Israeli forces.

Israeli withdrawal: In 2005, the Israeli government ordered Israeli troops and settlers occupying Gaza, along with more than 8,000 Jews who had settled in the territory.

Gaza soon became a center of power struggle between the Palestinian factions—representing the secular Palestine Liberation Organization—and the forces of Hamas.

2006 war: Before the war, Hamas won a landslide victory in the Palestinian legislative elections, with its main rival Mahmoud Abbas becoming prime minister.

Hamas' abduction of an Israeli soldier in June 2006 triggered a brutal response from Israel. A second front opened in Lebanon when Hezbollah killed eight Israeli soldiers and took two others as hostages.

With the suspension of support from the international community and blockade by Israel, Gaza residents suffered from heat, water and energy shortages.

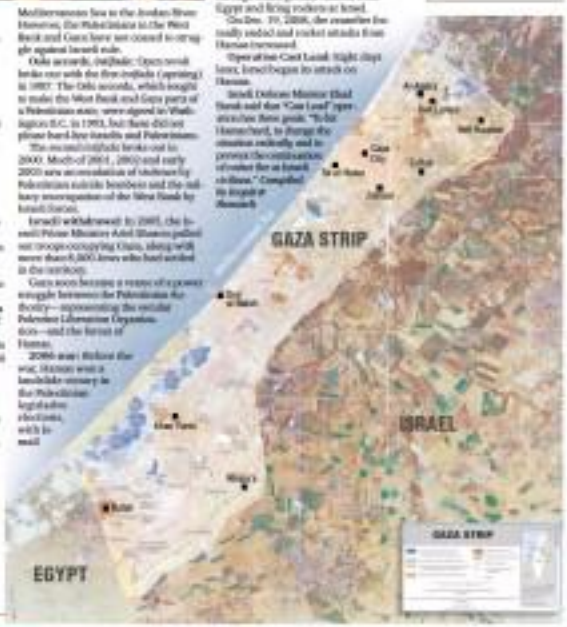
Ceasefire: Hamas forces fired rockets into Israel as a sign of protest but in June 2008, they entered a six-month truce brokered by Egypt.

The ceasefire was often broken. Even as Hamas continued to permit the economic blockade, Israel complained Hamas was smuggling arms into Gaza through underground tunnels from Egypt and firing rockets at Israel.

On Dec. 19, 2008, the ceasefire formally ended and rocket attacks from Hamas increased.

Operation Cast Lead: Eight days later, Israel began its attack on Hamas.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that "Cast Lead" operation has three goals: "To hit Hamas hard, to disrupt the situation radically and to prevent the continuation of rocket fire at Israeli civilians." Compiled by Ingrid Arnesen



ISRAEL FAST FACTS

Area: 20,770 sq km
Population: 7.1 million, including about 187,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and about 20,000 in the Golan Heights (July 2008 est.)
Religion: Jewish, 76.4 percent; Muslim, 16 percent; Arab Christians, 1.7 percent; other Christians, 0.4 percent; Druze, 1.6 percent; unspecified, 3.9 percent (2004)
Israel Defense Forces
Total: 621,500; 176,500 (Regular); 645,000 (Reserves).
Equipment: 3,400 tanks (to service), 8,500 armored fighting vehicles, 526 combat aircraft, 161 helicopters, 3 submarines, 11 combat vessels and 90 patrol craft (as of March 2008)

FATALITIES

Since Sept. 29, 2000

1,100
Palestinians (as of Jan. 15), many of them civilians, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health

13
Israelis, including 3 civilians

Page design: Lisa Sandoz

Hamas

Hamas is a fundamentalist organization formed by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin at the beginning of the first intifada (uprising) in December 1987. A Sunni group, Hamas is an offshoot of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

While a name which can be taken to mean "zeal, courage or strength," the "Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamiya" (Islamic Resistance Movement), Hamas is dedicated to the "establishment of an Islamic State in Palestine state that encompasses Israel, the West Bank and Gaza."

It does not recognize the right of Israel to exist. Its charter, approved in 1988, declares the Islamic Hamas goal of "destroying the state of Israel through jihad [Islamic holy war]."

Irresistible dominant party, the Palestine Liberation Organization, along with its biggest faction, Fatah, recognizes Israel. In January 2006, Hamas surprised the world by winning a majority (at least 76) of the 132 seats in the Palestinian Parliament, leaving only 43 seats to Fatah, which had dominated Parliament since former PLO chair Yasser Arafat took his oath of office in 1996 as the first president of the Palestinian National Authority.

Social programs

Hamas began participating in Palestinian elections after Arafat died in 2004. The group was divided into two main spheres of operation: social programs like building schools, hospitals and religious institutions; and military operations carried out by its armed wing, Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades.

"The group was popular among impoverished Palestinians because of its social programs and because of its opposition as not being corrupt. Fatah's inability to provide basic services, the corruption scandals in the Palestinian Authority and high unemployment, contributed greatly to Hamas' victory.

The results of the elections alarmed other countries and international organizations, such as the United States and the European Union, which branded Hamas a terrorist group.

The US, along with the EU, decided to stop sending "all but humanitarian aid" as Hamas continued to insist on refusing to recognize Israel's right to exist and renounce violence.

Military wing

Hamas took control of the Strip in June 2007, ousting the forces of Fatah, which administers the West Bank. Hamas' military wing is believed to be composed of more than 1,000 active members, according to a June 2008 report by the Council on Foreign Relations. Its sympathizers and supporters are said to number "thousands."

A study published by the Israeli Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center in 2008 estimates Hamas has 10,000 combatants. The study also says that despite the international blockade, Hamas has been able to smuggle more than 40 tons of explosives into Gaza.

Aside from using suicide bombers for the militia, Hamas has accepted responsibility for assaults on Israeli targets using mortars and Qassam rockets (improvised low-range weapons).

The rockets, which are 35 cm to 150 cm long, are usually made from metal tubing. They are fired from metal stands and have a maximum range of 14 km.

In the current conflict, Hamas has also fired Grad-model Katyusha rockets, which have a maximum range of 40 km, the farthest Hamas has fired so far. The rockets are filled with metal balls that can scatter up to 100 meters from the impact site.

Iran is reportedly funding Hamas. Iran, for its part, harbors Khaled Meshal, the political leader of Hamas.

Compiled by Inquirer Research

Across the NATION

Panlilio readies rap vs contractor

Legal action seen vs firm that got IT project during Mark Lapid term

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio has asked the provincial board to set aside funds for legal action against a company that did not deliver a P49-million geographic information system project during the term of former Gov. Mark Lapid.

The budget for the legal action against Geodata Solution Inc. was included in a budget hearing last week, Panlilio said on Saturday.

He instructed the provincial legal office to press charges after Geodata had failed to comply with its obligations.

Panlilio said a systems evaluation done last year by the Commission on Audit showed very low compliance in the terms of the contract.

In the build-transfer-operate contract, Geodata guaranteed that it would set up a center for the Pampanga Geographic Information System and install in the provincial and town government a computerized real property tax collection system.

No deliveries

None of these, even software, was delivered despite payments amounting to at least P47 million during the Lapid administration, documents showed.

The Japanese trust fund linked to South Goodman president Alberto Morales through a loan known to Go for contract to Pampanga Lapid at former provincial administrator Fidel Ayonon did not receive phone calls from the Inquirer.

Former provincial legal officer Illuminada Tobias confirmed holding several meetings with Geodata officials and treasurer Jhonnel Lorenzo.

There were done at the COA advised the provincial government to explore an amicable conclusion with Geodata, she said.

"We had several dialogues with Geodata. It did not comply with their undertaking," Tobias said.

Bulacan firms

Lapid pushed this geographic information system project in late 2000. The project got the nod of the previous provincial board through a resolution despite opposition by Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao.

The preparation of the charges against Geodata comes in the wake of reports from the World Bank that received commission from, two of them owned by Bulacan individuals, have been blacklisted from World Bank projects.

Two construction firms that were involved in the World Bank-funded farm-to-market public works contracts due to illegal corruption in collusion with government officials were from Bulacan.

C. M. Pleyto Construction Inc., owned by the late Cornelio Pleyto, brother of Bulacan Rep. Pedro Pleyto, is in Bulacan town, while E. C. de Leon Construction Corp., owned by Eduardo C. de Leon, is in Bocaue town.

Both firms have offices in Metro Manila. They were among seven contractors from that were blacklisted by the World Bank after they were found to have rigged bids for local road project funded by agency. The five others were Chinese firms.

Marcelo Mendiola, head of the Fire Bomber Engineering office of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Bulacan, said the two companies have not been involved in any local project because they usually cater to huge road programs.

C. M. Pleyto Construction, which also owns the Northwoods Golf and Country Club in San Rafael town, built the Bulacan Bypass in 2008.

Mendiola said it was the regional office of the DPWH need not his office that constructed the building for the Bulacan bypass project. —Inquirer Regional Correspondents Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

IFUGAO men take part in thanksgiving rituals for a good harvest in Mungulian town.

Ifugao, Kalinga folk show way to graft-free roads

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

IFUGAO CITY—GOVERNMENT HAS PROBLEMS addressing graft in road projects but Cordillera villagers have solved these by taking projects away from contractors and building them themselves.

The community volunteers of Ifugao, Mt. Province and Kalinga were presented as a Presidency award finalist for the Department of Social Welfare and Development, where they proposed what they believed to be the acceptable way of bridging the Cordillera provinces.

The volunteers helped enforce the participatory governance project called "Kasadi" (Kapit Bisig Lubos sa Kalinaysan), which was initiated by former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman and Ramon Jesus Paje, former presidential adviser on poverty alleviation.

Both Soliman and Dinky are now cabinet of President Benigno Aquino, but the administration pursued Kasadi and has been able to institutionalize a system that has discouraged graft-laden infrastructure projects, said Rodelio Bolocan, DSWD Cordillera director.

16 steps

By devising a 16-step system for auditing, planning and enforcing infrastructure projects in Tinoc, Kalinga; Tinoc, Ifugao; Sadanga, Mt. Province, and Tinoc, Ifugao, the villagers completed road projects by "practically doing it on their own," Bolocan said.

"[Then] Ifugao social worker Betty Dulip.

Each of the barangays was provided P500,000 grants by donors and by the region's Kasadi Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS).

In some cases, the local Kasadi system worked because villagers themselves took on projects, instead of local contractors, said Jasmin Asuncion, DSWD Cordillera social worker in charge of Kasadi.

Bernardet said the villagers removed the "profit element" from the construction of public roads, so they were able to complete all the allocated funds.

Asuncion said the villagers also managed to reinvest road projects by a few months when the initial project generated savings.

Detailed accounting

In many cases, the villagers convinced their contractors to use the fees for personnel to village finance very detailed accounting of the money spent on the roads, said Eva Mello, a Tinoc volunteer.

Every villager was allowed about expenses, even if the money was used to buy shad minnie that were distributed and shared during census [meal treats], said Asuncion.

Gregorio Dagdagan of Tanudan said the villagers cooperated because they followed traditional community rules.

"Ligligon," the Tanudan version of Bayanihan or cooperation, was another, and it convinced even local contractors to plough back some of their profits to strengthen these projects, Dagdagan said.

Bernardet said contractors over-greed may have diminished the public's trust in government.

"But not everything now is about corruption," she said, because of other three villages accomplished.

Asuncion said the villagers may not be ready to take on flagship road projects like the completion of the Halsema Highway, which links Baguio to the vegetable farms of Benguet and Mt. Province.

40 rescued from capsized boat

By Jimmie Magallanes
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—A MOTORIZED BOAT THAT joined the fluvial parade held in honor of the Santo Nio. Mike capsized and sank off Mactan Channel but no other ship in the fleet was damaged by a firecracker exploded by one of the boat's passengers.

All 40 passengers, all adults, were rescued by the Coast Guard and Philippine Navy, but the boat started to sink at around 9 a.m. yesterday.

Bill Bennett and Ryker was the last among 40 vessels and motorized boats that took part in the annual fluvial procession that moves the Sinulog image of Sto. Nio from Mactan Island to the Basilica del Santo Nio in Cebu City.

The event is a major religious highlight in the weeklong Sinulog Festival, held in honor of the Santo Nio. Thus, vessels will culminate today in a day-long street dancing festival.

Commander Antonio Castelo, chief of staff and information officer of the Coast Guard District of Central Visayas, said the capsized boat had not registered for the procession and had wanted to sneak in the last mock of the sea parade.

Castelo said all the passengers were taken

Hunger stalks remote Samar villages

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—SEVERE HUNGER AFFECTS over 7,000 residents of two island barangays of Guiuan, Eastern Samar as food supplies could no longer reach them due to continuous rain and strong winds.

The remote islands of Homonhon and of Suluan Island have become inaccessible because of the bad weather, according to Guiuan Mayor Ricardo Evelyn.

"I really feel helpless. I want to help our people there but could not do anything except to pray for the weather condition to improve so we can deliver food to our people there who have been suffering for a week now," Evans said in a telephone interview Saturday.

Suluan and Homonhon are the farthest island-barangays of Guiuan, located within the Pacific Ocean some 600 kilometers southeast of Tacloban City.

The preparation of the charges against Geodata comes in the wake of reports from the World Bank that received commission from, two of them owned by Bulacan individuals, have been blacklisted from World Bank projects.

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Maynilad

January 16, 2009

PANAWAGAN UKOL SA DESISYON NG MWSS NA HUWAG MAGTAAS ANG MAYNILAD NG SINGIL SA TUBIG

Umaapela ang MAYNILAD sa ongong panya ng MWSS na huwag magkaroon ng pagtaas sa singil ng tubig sa darating na Pebrero 1...2009.

Nais ng MAYNILAD na ipaalam sa publiko na umunang pagpapabatas sa pagtaas ng singil sa tubig ay labag makatarungan sa pagpapasiya ng MAYNILAD na mga serbisyo obligasyon nito, partikular sa 3,000,000 residente ng West Zone na wala pang supply ng maaring tubig mula sa MAYNILAD, pati na ang mga kasalukuyang customers nito na umaasa sa mas pinabuting at maaasahang serbisyo sa mga darating na taon.

1. Gaano kalaweak ang epekto ng hindi pagpapatupad ng 30% na ongo-nilalang dagdag singil sa tubig?

Sa kasalukuyan, may 3,000,000 customers sa metropolitan ng MAYNILAD ang hindi pa kumokonekta sa MAYNILAD, at patuloy na umaasa sa water deliveries at deep wells.

Kapag ang customers na ito sa mga low-consume ng 10 cu.m. month, maghahabol sila nang humigang P1,500 month kumpara sa pamahalang singil ng MAYNILAD na P138.38/month lamang.

Ang customers naman sa mga high-consume ng 30 cu.m. month ay maghahabol ng humigang P6,500/month labas sa pamahalang singil ng MAYNILAD na P615.71/month. Bukod dito, may nakaantapay pa ang mga MAYNILAD customers na ang tubig na kanilang tinitinan ay marumi at hapon.

Naniniwalaggan ang MAYNILAD sa mayroon nito na halos na mapaghingkuan ang 9,000,000 customers nito sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng lapsa na maaring tubig sa kanilang tahanan sa buong kabuuan. Subalit ito ay posible lamang kung maipatupad ng MWSS, sa labing mahabang panahon, ang rekomendasyong dagdag singil sa tubig.

2. Magkano ar ano ang impact ng dagdag na singil sa tubig na nais nanang maipatupad ng MAYNILAD?

Para sa 2009, ang dagdag nanang singil ng MAYNILAD ay P10.96/cu.m., on the average. Para sa kasalukuyan ng labas ang kanyahan ng 1 cu.m. ay 4 maliliong dinero o 1,000 litro ng tubig.

Ngunit ito'y hindi nangangahulugan na labat ng customers ng Maynilad ay maghahabol ng gumiwang halaga. Ito ay nagagkat "highly metered" ang singil sa tubig ng MAYNILAD. Ibig sabihin, mas mahaba ang singil sa low-income low-consuming customers, at mas mataas ang singil sa commercial, industrial at iba pang customers na mataas ang konsumo sa tubig.

a. Para sa mga maglot-consume ng 10 cu.m. month, o pahinba, ang nan sa singil ay nasa 996.41 hanggang P 138.38/month, na ipinatong nang dalawa dahan sa buh ng isang nan-kongsumo ng tubig. Lalabas na ang pagtaas ay **P 3.99/cu.m.** o **P 13/1 lamang bawat araw.** Hindi pa nito kalamitan ang halaga ng 1 cigarillo.

b. Para naman sa mga maglot-consume ng 30 cu.m. month, ang ay magkakaroon ng average increase na **P 4.71/cu.m** na ipinatong din nang dalawa dahan sa buh ng isang tao. Ang kasilang average monthly water bill ay nasan mula P 614.08 hanggang P 633.71 o P1.31/month. Dalos kasamahan lamang nito ang presyo ng isang kilo ng manok.

c. Samantala, ang mga business customers gaya ng sari-sari store at iba pang maliit na negosyo na maglot-consume ng 10 cu.m. month, ay makakaranas ng pagbabago sa kanilang buwanan at humigang **P 48.37/month**. Ito ay dahil sa ipapatupad ng MWSS na policy kung saan ang mga non-business establishments ay mangbabayad ng mas mataas na residential rate sa unang 10 cu.m. ng kanilang water consumption.

3. Ano ang saan rehasing pasong?

Sa ay isang proyekto na pinapanap kada 5 taon ayon sa Concession Agreement na pinirmahan ng MWSS at ng dalawang water concessionaires sa Metro Manila, kung saan sinusuring pang-aarabo ng MWSS Regulatory Office ang performance at mga pagsulong ng concessionaires sa nakaraan na 5 taon, gayundin ang kanilang mga pagsapit sa ni-nanand pang 5 taon ayon sa business plan nito.

Layunin ng MWSS-RO na makasiguro na pinakamagkaroon ang singil sa tubig na magbibigay-daan upang mabawi ng concessionaires ang kanilang mga nagig pahunan sa mahusayong paraan, habang pinangangalagaan ang interes ng consumers. Ang publiko ay nakaanggan na ang MAYNILAD ay sumusod sa labat ng alituntunin at tuntunig proseso sa nagsisip na rate rebasing process.

4. Ano ang hamban sa pagtaas sa singil ng MAYNILAD sa susog ito?

Mula 2008 hanggang 2012, ang MAYNILAD ay nakatakdang gumugol ng P57 Billion para sa mga makabuluhang projects o CAPEX projects. Ang mga CAPEX projects sa kinakailangan upang matustusan ng MAYNILAD ang mga serbisyo obligasyon nito sa Concession Agreement, gaya ng mas malawak na saklaw ng serbisyo, mas maliwan na supply at presyon ng tubig, mas maibang na customer service, at mas mahabang Non-Revenue Water o pagkawala ng tubig dahil sa mga tagas sa tubo.

INQUIRER Mindanao

Radio man finds freedom a new start

By Gerardine Lucero
Davao City

FREEDOM after four years in jail for a libel conviction means a new start for broadcaster Alexander Adonis, who hoists it over the high and mighty as he sets pulling the strings in his settlement and pardon.

AFTER 20 DAYS AFter his release from the Davao Penal Colony, jailed broadcaster Alexander "Lex" Adonis is back in action. Looking emaciated, he covered the release of Rear Lt. Victoire Cornejo from the bunch of the commander New Peoples Army (NPA) in the hinterlands of Agusan del Sur.

But as soon as he reached the station's Mindanao Command headquarters in Camp Panacan, where Cornejo's third in-service finally took place, he discovered he failed to bring a tape recorder or a pen.

"I still feel slightly disoriented," said Adonis, trying to rest his was usurped after spending almost two years in jail for the libel case filed against him by Speaker Prospero Nograles.

"I don't even know how to operate my cellphone. It's only now I know had one in the last two years," he said.

Apology

The Davao broadcaster was released on Christmas Eve, following the apology he issued to open court to Jeanette Loreto-Go, who filed a second case against him based on the same Bantayan King recorded that rumored nine-year and a half years in prison for libel in 2006.

But lawyers and media groups led by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) said his release only proved how press freedom continues to be under siege in the country.

"In the first place, there was no need for that apology," said Harry Roque, chair of the Center for International Law (Centerlaw), a lawyers' group advocating freedom of expression.

"He had been guarded protection after serving his minimum term in prison and media colleagues had pooled bail for his second case," Roque said. "There was no longer any reason why he has to stay in jail."

Criminal act

Adonis' conviction in 2006 had revived the raging debate on the decriminalization of libel, a law which, according to NUJP and press freedom groups, has been increasingly used by powerful politicians to harass the press.

Roque and Nograles, the fourth most powerful person in the country as Speaker of the House, had ridiculed the apology as a pre-condition for the broadcaster's release.

"This does not bode well for press freedom because influential public officials can deter those who amongst the media practitioners should be jailed and when they should be released," Roque said. "Speaker Nograles claimed that Adonis owed his new found freedom to him, by providing up on Loreto to be drop the case."

Adonis was sentenced five days and a half years in jail for libel in 2006 after a series of radio commentary it deliberate the "Batangas Ring," in which according to Court proceedings, Adonis identified Nograles as the man running naked in a Manila hotel after the husband of the woman he was with caught them inside the hotel room.

But June 13, 2007 the Board of Pardon and Parolee granted Adonis parole. Roque said that the Department chief did not talk to Adonis about the parole until he left Davao after issued me that a parole has been issued for Adonis after the NUJP engaged him as Adonis' lawyer.

Another case

Deputy chief Manuel Theron, however, told him to unsure how the jailed broadcaster because of a pending second libel case by Loreto-Go.

Mr. Theron, who early has controlled powers over prisoners, argued that the pending case dismissed Adonis from receiving his parole," Roque said.

After members of the Davao media paid P5,000 bail bond for Adonis' temporary liberty from the second libel case, Davao Regional Trial Court Branch 34 ordered his release on May 20 last year.

But prisons officer refused to release him.

"In Dagondi above the court" asked Bodong Solis, Radio Mindanao Network (RMN) vice president for Mindanao.

Press club role

This prompted the NUJP Center Law and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMF, FR) to file petition for the writ of habeas corpus with the Supreme Court on behalf of Adonis. But before the High Court could resolve the petition, the National Press Club (NPC) pressured Adonis to apologize to Loreto.

Adonis said he was approached by the National Press Club president Benny Antiporda, who said he only had to apologize so that he could be freed. Adonis said he signed it said it would be a Christmas gift for him.

"Mind the gift to my family," Adonis said he told Antiporda.

As a result, Adonis discharged the second case. Roque in favor of it, however engaged by the NPC to facilitate the broadcaster's apology in court. "He told me, 'pakapas na lang siya and say thank you, wala na 'yan's sentence kita, sir. 'Thank you,' that's all," Adonis said he replied to told him. Adonis

> "Speaker Nograles claimed that Adonis owed his new found freedom to him..."

was also promised a livelihood check during the press conference and said, 'Hindi na kailangan ko 'yan.'"

But on the day of his release, Adonis refused to face Nograles in a press conference arranged by the NPC at the Apo View Hotel here. She also made himself very namin.

"Speaker Nograles talked," Adonis said. "Hindi ko na sagutin at kids."

Now, you're asking me if it's very emotional that I did not join the press con? Sir, it was emotional."

Solis said that the media is supposed to be a watchdog of democracy and has a role to play to make the citizens informed but such a court conference will project the message that there's a powerful person who can send a journalist to jail and can decide when to take him away from prison.

"I was not only about Lex Adonis," Solis said. "If he was pressured there for the press conf, the media will be stripped of its dignity. To think that here is a very powerful man who can [illegible] in jail and now he's talking like God."

But Adonis, who declined to say sorry to Loretoto was a "hard" source. "But it didn't mean cooperation," he said, "It did not mean submission of guilt."

He said he will resist politicians who only wish to capitalize on his case for their own political ends. He thanked Deputy chief Theron but condemned "human rights" in some sectors" to exploit him. "Pressures and elaboration suffered by my family through these years are

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

January 22-23, 2009 - (Thursday-Sunday)
2:00 P.M.-12 MN. Iloilo Hotels Restaurants and Resorts Association (IHRRA) Food Festival
Iloilo Sports Complex

January 23, 2009 - (Friday)
0:00 A.M. DRUM and BUGLE Tambor, Trumpa, Martsa, Musika
Freedom Grandstand
3:00 P.M. FLUVIAL PROCESSION
From Fort San Pedro Drive via to disembark in front of Customs House & followed by Solemn Procession to San Jose Parish Church

January 24, 2009 - (Saturday)
0:00 A.M. KASADYAHAN Competition
Freedom Grandstand & other stages
2:00 P.M. SPONSORS MARDI GRAS
Freedom Grandstand and other stages
7:00 P.M. LUGES IN THE SKY
SM City Iloilo

January 25, 2009 - (Sunday)
0:00 A.M. DINAGYANG ATI CONTEST
Freedom Grandstand & other stages
5:00 P.M. SALVO OF A THOUSAND DRUMS
Iloilo Sports Complex
7:00 P.M. CLOSING AND AWARDING CEREMONIES WITH PASCUAL'S INVADERS AND FIREWORKS DISPLAY
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Sunday SPORTS

Garret II, Movellund Races at San Lazaro

MANILA JOCKEY CLUB WILL STAGE THE PHILIPPINE RACING COM-mission-funded Garret II and Movellund Races today at its San Lazaro Leisure and Business Park in Carmona, Cavite. Garret II will make a championship pursue of P500,000.

E-mail: sports@inquirer.com.ph
Website: sports.inquirer.net/sports
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

Other side of Valley brawl?

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

AFTER VALLEY Golf and Country Club member Bobbi de la Paz was expelled by the board for the meeting incidents involving him and his two children and the Pinedo family of Lanao Del Norte, I thought that an explanation from my former classmate at St. Joseph's College was in order.

My classmate, whose daughter is a daughter based in the United States, had frantically called me a few hours after the incident for what she called "authentic documentation" by a member of the media.

She said she wanted me to get the facts before they get muddled through acts of intimidation and possibly, bribery.

She claimed her daughter saw the incident and told her about it.

I had a small item in this column two days after that call. However, although I got a copy of the blog from De la Paz's 18-year-old daughter, who gave a blow-by-blow account of the resulting incident, I never got to write in-depth or laboriously about the case since the other camp's story was not told. Nobody picked up the story in a big way.

But with the recent developments—the De la Paz family is now appearing to be the villain instead of the victim—I had to get back to my classmate for some enlightenment, more than anything.

* * *

My classmate was horrified by my insinuation that De la Paz might be at fault. But why would he be suspended by the Valley Golf board, which I presume to be a level-headed, responsible group?

Had I, too, been brainwashed by the false accounts I've been hearing and reading, she taunted to know.

"They've twisted everything around. Backlighted na lahat. It's unbelievable! Except for a 18-year-old boy who bore witness to De la Paz's bad temper, everyone is now scared to step forward and speak the truth," she lashed.

"The Valley Golf board based its decision so steeped on the testimony of a toddler who said that it was De la Paz who started it all."

While the 55-year-old De la Paz is pursuing his criminal charges in court against the thugs-turned-state witnesses, my classmate said, he has avoided the fairways since the incident.

"As of now, they are unable to play the game of golf. The whole family has been so traumatized by the incident, most especially the 14-year-old Rino, whose ear was practically ripped off by a strong blow delivered by one of the hooligans," she added.

"Rino was on his knees begging them to stop beating his father," added my classmate.

"My heart goes out to them. Now they've even on the defensive. They're not haughty and arrogant as pictured. I know because I've known them personally for years."

Valenzuela tops inaugural ICFP cycling tilt

IRISH MALFREDA ELA CASTAÑEDA FINAL CREDIT: Rookie is cycling champion-wins from Iconic De Jesus/Lawsuit of the Independent Cycling Federation of the Philippines at Friday at the Clarion Memorial Circle in Sanson City.

The Metro Manila rider topped the 50-lap event participated in by former Tour champions Victor Espiritu and Warren Dandila, Lloyd Mercante and over 200 cyclists in a show of support for newly elected ICFP president Rolando C. Valenzuela.

Valenzuela, who was unchallenged in the multi-staged bicycle marathon this summer, is make up for the failure of previous national-cycling leaders in that decided to scratch the annual Metro Manila tour anomaly in the last South-east Asian Games.

"I thank all the participants, this is a demonstration of overwhelming support," Philippine Postal Corporation chairman Valenzuela to national cycling," said they, who also thanked PSC president Peping Cojuangco and special assistant to the PSC president Go Teng Kok for their support.

Aces eye 3-0 lead; SMB, TNT break tie

By Gilbert Torres (Manila Bulletin)
6:15 p.m.—Alaska vs. Sta. Lucia
8:30 p.m.—San Miguel vs. Talk 'N Text

RUSH HOT TANQUINCIEN AND Tim Cone got what they want. Cone, however, is the one who finds himself in a better position.

The grand dam Alaska veteran watched his team hold off Sta. Lucia to barometer out a 94-87 victory that gave the three a 2-0 lead over the Realtors in the 32nd PBA Philippine Cup last Friday night at the Araneta Coliseum.

San Miguel Beer produced a 112-103 triumph earlier that day, but all Tim Cone got was the Beermen managed to do what would a 6-2 finale against Talk 'N Text and square their half of the semifinal duel at 1-1.

"We really wanted to grab the momentum here," Cone said after the victory. "Last time we played Sta. Lucia [in a series] they came back so strong and really hose us up with really hard play. We didn't want that to happen."

Cone was referring to last year's semifinals, where the Realtors reversed a Game 1 defeat with back-to-back wins and eventually took the series, 4-3. Sta. Lucia also went on to beg Alaska early All-Filipino title run for opposite Purefoods.

"I thought we handled it a lot better this time," said Cone. "We stuck to more basics. That's the key for us against Sta. Lucia, play at their level of intensity."

The Aces go for a historically insurmountable 3-0 lead when they take on the Realtors today at 4 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum while the Beermen and the Tropang Texters break their tie at 8:30 p.m.

With both teams dominating each other in the first two games of the series, things are expected to be a lot tighter in this crucial tie-breaker and Tanquincien can hope that his squad—led by Dondon Hontiveros, Omeir Seigle, Olsen Racela and rookie Reuben Guinto—will get the job done against the Kiko Cardona-led Texters.

"Expect a tough series," Tanquincien said. The Beermen hope to suit up Lordy Tugade tonight, but Miguel coach the sweet-shooting guard, who has been playing with tendonitis in his left knee.

JIMMY Alapag and the Talk 'N Text Tropang Texters try to grab a 2-1 lead against the San Miguel Beermen tonight.

Pacman rejects latest proposal

By Cedelf P Tupas

BACOLOD CITY—MANNY PACQUIAO yesterday rejected a Top5 proposal for a 52-40 nowness shooting with British superstar Ricky Hatton in their 140-lb battle in May.

And the latest verse in the negotiations could spoil the date for Floyd Mayweather Jr., whose handlers, Pacquiao disclosed, have been communicating with his camp for a possible match that could face the former pound-for-pound king out of his retirement.

But Pacquiao isn't about to give up on the Hatton fight just yet.

"Eto nga, magkaroon ako ulit [You see, they changed their minds]," Pacquiao said with a laugh as if to stress that he is still the draw in this planned super fight pitting the world's top pound-for-pound fighter against the king of the junior welterweight division.

"Hindi pa din kami magkasundo. Wala pa kaming final decision. Maybe may adjustment pa sa either part. Pero still bisyon ng aming pag-uusap [We haven't made a final decision. There might be adjustments on their part]."

He added: "Hindi siya pending negotiation ng mga dayalogan. Eto ang't ko dawa ka-dagdag-pa-one-on-one'ni."

Pacquiao, though, went a sharpish with when asked if he was amenable to a 50 per-cent share of the fight and pay-per-view revenues, an idea which was branded by his American trainer Freddie Roach.

Pacquiao, who had demanded for a 60-40 sharing, said he is considering his trainer's proposal during a press conference before the opening of the Smart-Alap National Amateur Boxing Championships here. (See related story below)

Pacquiao said a final decision on the fight will be known as early as next week, though his business manager Rex Pacardo, in a separate interview, claimed that the Filipino champion has set a deadline for the negotiations on the last week of February.

"Maybe bleeding we will have a decision or within next week," the 30-year-old Pacquiao said.

The Hatton camp and Pacquiao's promoter Bob Arum had agreed verbally to an equal sharing for the British fighter and the Filipino idol this last month, after Pacquiao demolished American star Oscar De La Hoya.

Bacchus boots out Burger King

By Jasmine W Poyo

DALL LEE BESOSE BITE AS ALL-arsenal gamer at Bacchus made it to the Final four with a 69-68 victory over Burger King in the PNL PG Flex Linderam Cup yesterday at the Candelaspe Viva Sports Complex in Makati City.

Bacchus cupped his heroics by knocking in a clutch 15-foot jumper with 36 seconds left to cushion a 64-68 advantage after the Boomers rallied from 21 points down.

"Time and time again he fished us out, he's a proven superstar disguised as a rookie," Bacchus coach Lawrence Chongson said of the University of the East standout, who leads the league in average 16.8 points per game.

Lee finished with a double-double of 17 markers and 11 rebounds on top of three assists and five steals.

In the other quarterfinal match, Blazer sustained its coupled con-by-tipping Super Toothpaste with a 70-62 win to forge a winner-take-all duel for the last semifinal slot on Sunday.

It was the fifth straight victory for the Generals, who refused to die despite opening the season with six straight losses.

Box scores:

Final Game

BACCHUS (6) – Lee 17, Carreon 11, Alamos 11, Dolor 9, Dizon 5, Park 5, Dagohoy 5, Calalang 3, Fuentes 2, Ocampo 2, Lee 2.

BURGER KING (6) – Diaz 16, Bernal 16, Ramos 8, Nuesal 8, Santos 5, Ramos 5, Zamudio 2, Mercado 2, Avellana 2, Lazarus 2, Sarate 0.

Quarters: 20-8, 42-32, 58-48, 69-68

Semifinal Game

PHOENIX (8) – Talaroc 15, Juanito 12, Go 8, Malapitan, Bautista, Aguilar, Villareal, Bautista, Carillo, Millan 2, Miller 0.

HAPEE (6) – Angeles 11, Sagarael 10, Santos-Singson 7, Cruz 6, Tan 5, Wee 3, Bitoon 0, Dupalco 0, Ygarta 0, Zamarro 0, Gaerlan 0.

Quarters: 20-10, 32-26, 54-46, 70-65

Magic zap Kobe, Lakers

LOS ANGELES—JAMEER NELSON scored 15 of his team-high 28 points in the decisive fourth quarter to help the visiting Orlando Magic stymie the Los Angeles Lakers 108-103 on Friday.

Nelson's late-game heroics, coupled with Dwight Howard's 25 points and 20 rebounds, allowed the Magic to withstand a triple-double by reigning MVP Kobe Bryant.

Nelson drained a three-point shot with 39 seconds left to give Orlando a 104-101 edge, and added four free throws down the stretch.

The Magic have claimed both of their matchups with the Lakers this season and wear their sixth straight overall.

"We played hard for four quarters and I think a tough team," Howard told reporters. "We're trying to get better every day and every team we play here now on will be great—we have to answer the challenge."

Bryant recorded 28 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for the 10th triple-double of his career in the loss, going into the fourth quarter where he shot just 3-for-12.

His potential game-tying three-pointer with 11 seconds left hit the rim but would not drop into the basket.

"We had good looks. Some nights they're not going to go in," said Los Angeles coach Phil Jackson. Reuters

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Washington 98, New York 86; Philadelphia 103, Sacramento 87; Indiana 111, Toronto 108; Utah 103, Memphis 83; Baltimore City 96, Detroit 91; Cleveland 95, San Antonio 93; Minnesota 108, Phoenix 102; Milwaukee 120, Golden State 109; Los Angeles Clippers 101, Atlanta 94; Orlando 108, Los Angeles Lakers 103.

NELSON's Clutch time

SPORTSWATCH

TCC golf stakes P4.63M

A RECORD TOTAL PURSE OF P4.63 million will be up for grabs when The Country Club invitational teams off Jan. 22-25 at The Country Club in Laguna.

Competing for the lucrative top prize of P1.35 million are the top 36 players of the 2008 Philippine Golf Tour's Order of Merit (OOM) headed by Angelo Que.

Focus, however, will be on back-to-back champion Jeev Pagunsan, who is No. 2 in the rankings but is tagged heavy favorite in the event held in honor of CTC founder-Senator "Dave Puyat Jr." Pagunsan Sr.

After topping the annual Fedex-like race in a title-playoff in the 2008 edition, Pagunsan, aided by a record-tying 64 in the first round, handed the field with an 11-stroke victory over Que.

Other probable contenders are 2004 winner Tony Lascuña, Mars Pocia, Ray Pagunsan, Jay Bacarro, Marvin Dumanig, Dino Salvador, Sergio Magsaysay and Roland Pastrana.

Pacquiao vows full support for amateur boxing

By Cedelf P Tupas

BACOLOD CITY—THE COUNTRY'S TOP professional boxer is ready to lend a hand in the amateur front.

With the new leadership of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines expected to name its soon-to-be-established regional training centers after him, Filipino idol Manny Pacquiao, gave a standout assurance to his peers, yesterday vowed to give his all-out support to the boxing body's programs.

"When it comes to boxing, I'm all out in my support," said Pacquiao, who is backing the teams of General Santos City and Sarangani during action in the Smart-Alap National Amateur Boxing Championships which started yesterday.

Unbeknown to many Pacquiao was an aspiring amateur boxing star in the early 1990s. Pacquiao said he fought 64 times as an amateur, losing just thrice, before turning pro in 1995.

"I'll help supervise their training, give them advice and tell them the value of discipline so they could achieve what I have achieved now," added Pacquiao when asked of his role in the training center of the Abay.

Abay president Bobby Vargas said putting up the Manny Pacquiao Amateur Boxing Academy is one of the focal points of the organization's programs in an effort to bolster the country's chances of winning the country's first gold medal in the London Olympics in 2012.

PACQUIAO

A fighting chance for Pinoy boxers

When business leader and sports patron Manny V. Pangilinan recently visited a local boxing competition in Pampanga, he was stunned to know that the prize the aspiring pugilists – some of them coming from as far as the Bicol Region – were fighting for was a measly P 400. It is the same lack of material support that drove the PLDT and SMART Philippines chairman to immerse himself in sports as early as 1999 when he took over management of the then Mobiline team, now known as Talk N' Text, playing in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA). But while basketball enjoyed a wide support from the private sector, the rest of the Philippine sporting world did not. One such sport is boxing, which is deemed the most likely to bring the first Olympic gold to the country.

PANGILINAN KNOW THAT WITHOUT THE HELPING hand from business and other concerned sectors, the dream of landing the elusive Olympic gold will remain just a dream. Last year, after some deep thought, Pangilinan accepted the chairmanship of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP). It is to his credit that Philippine boxing is now facing a brighter future not only in capturing the much desired Olympic gold but also in having aspiring boxers one becoming disciplined, dedicated and self-fulfilled individuals. This is the same vision he has for Filipino athletes – to become truly world class.

Manny V. Pangilinan, Dax Viva, Pato Gregorio and Waheed Alkaguan at the ALA Boxing stable, Cebu City.

His mission, which has remained the same since he first got involved in basketball, is to professionalize Philippine sports. Beyond the banners, trophies and the marketing windfall, his initial focuses on how to inspire athlete – particularly big business – to get involved and share in the overall uplift of athletes and facilities.

"In many respects, sports is a strong metaphor for life. Sports is about excellence, about working hard, about setting goals, about winning but winning the right way," he was once quoted.

With that tenet in mind, it's no wonder that Pangilinan – a man with a burning passion for sports – brought to life a brainchild designed to put the Philippines on the international sporting map.

Taking the lead

Last year, SMART embarked on a program to identify, train and reward Filipino athletes. The challenge was to move the brand from being a mere sponsor of sporting events to a genuine advocate – a real driver behind the Filipinos' love for sports.

At the helm of the effort is youthful Patrick "Pato" Gregorio who is the head of SMART's Sports Marketing and Special Projects. He was also recently installed secretary-general of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP).

Gregorio notes that SMART has realized that many budding sports heroes are choosing to become professionals even before they could realize a name for themselves and for the country. The reason: financial necessity.

SMART then decided to put equal emphasis on the heart's bravery of result – Ako, Pamilya, Proklamya and Bayan. By addressing his personal needs, this program encourages the athlete to strive to win honor for his family and eventually for the country. It is a template that SMART hopes would be adopted throughout Philippine sports.

Going for gold

By using its extraordinary reach and recognition, SMART makes it possible to find talents from the grassroots, tap their potential and ultimately create world-class sports warriors with a fighting chance of winning gold at the 2012 London Olympics that has eluded our athletes for so long.

SMART's Deedo Alejos, who spearheads marketing and is a keen and astute enthusiast himself, says the company would definitely help even outside the boxing ring. However, it will take more than just funds to shape the country's sports heroes.

"What Philippine sports needs now is the commitment to reach out and the passion to excel and make things happen, and this goes for everyone whether athlete, fan, leader or patron", Alejos says.

Bringing it on

A timely development, the 1st SMART National Amateur Boxing Championship was created by SMART as the perfect vehicle for the sports crusade. With an estimated 400 participants, it is probably the biggest and most important boxing event the country has ever seen.

"We felt the need for a nationwide boxing tournament designed to establish a tangible venue for camaraderie and closer brotherhood amongst the different boxing organizations under ABAP's auspices", says ABAP president Ricky Vargas, who is also a top executive of PLDT.

"The objective here is to widen the identification and recruitment of promising Filipino boxers to be trained and molded into highly competitive athletes who will bring honor to the country in international competitions," he adds.

The new ABAP leadership seeks to reformat the existing set-up to start with a regional search for talents who will be invited to the national pool and which will culminate in a grand national championship, the next edition of which will probably be held in early 2010.

ABAP Chairman Manny V. Pangilinan and ABAP president Ricky Vargas

Bright tomorrow

With Pangilinan's business acumen, honed through years of professional excellence and hard work, and his commitment to lend more than a helping hand, the Filipino athlete can look forward to gaining more respect and recognition from the international sporting community.

His acceptance of ABAP's chairmanship is a vote of confidence for the Filipino boxer and a gesture of optimism that the Philippines will eventually land the much-coveted Olympic gold.

The current involvement of Pangilinan and SMART in boxing, basketball, taekwondo and later tennis is just the beginning. With his passion simply overflowing and more passion like him emerging, there's no doubt the best is yet to come in Philippine sports.

It is his humble beginnings that enable him to relate to the inadequacies currently facing the Filipino athlete. It is his management acumen and vision plus the inspiration he brings to others, including SMART's own commitment to help, that will carry the Filipino athlete through – in and out of the sports arena.

"Above all, let us shrink from no challenge, moral or physical, within or outside this nation, for it is only by intense and dedicated endeavour, that we can ultimately win the goal of true national greatness."

– MANUEL L. QUEZON

SMART amateur boxing tourney opens Jan 16

ABAP calls congress to draft blueprint

AT LEAST 400 AMATEUR boxers from all over the Philippines are competing for honor and a chance to improve their lives in the ongoing 2009 SMART National Amateur Boxing Championships in Bacolod City.

Thanks to SMART Philippines, the country's leading cellular phone provider, the aspiring pugilists now have a venue to show their wares and end up representing the Philippines in international competitions – and maybe even pursue a professional path towards fame, glory and wealth.

"This is SMART's way of helping our country produce the finest amongst our amateur boxers, and enhance the Philippines' chances of hosting an Olympic gold one day soon," said Patrick Gregorio, head of SMART Sports Marketing and Special Projects. He is also secretary-general of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP).

To inspire the boxing hopefuls, no less than boxing hero Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao was invited to grace the opening ceremonies held last Friday at the MEWBAC in Bacolod City. It was Pacquiao's first trip to Bacolod after his spectacular victory over world-boxing icon Oscar de la Hoya in December.

The week-long 2009 SMART National Amateur Boxing Championships which opened last January 16 is being held in coordination with ABAP, Bacolod Congressional District Office, Philippine Sports Commission, Negros Amateur Boxing Association (NABA), and the office of Governor Isidro Rueda.

Another highlight of the event is the staging of the Boxing Congress on 3pm on January 22 at the Tivoli Hotel to formulate a blueprint in discovering new boxing heroes in preparation for the Asian Games, Southeast Asian Games and the Olympics.

The amateur boxing championships and the national boxing congress form part of SMART's commitment to professionalize Philippine sports and encourage the private sector and other entities to join in and help bring glory to the country as well as mold the youth.

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ABAP

Aplus METRO

UP parish church renovation a work of love, sacrifice

Parishioners patiently wait to see dome free from leaks

FRESHLY painted dome of the famed UP chapel in Diliman, Quezon City

By Julie M. Aurelio

WHAT USED TO BE THE PRISTINE WHITE DOME of the historic round-shaped chapel is now streaked with ugly watermarks and nasty leaks during the rainy season.

But thanks to kind-hearted churchgoers and their determined parish priest, the Parish of the Holy Sacrifice might no longer be the dripping dome it used to be and which has contributed to the deterioration of the chapel for more than 50 years.

The renovation of the dome was supposed to be completed by the end of 2008 which, coincidentally, was the University of the Philippines' centennial year.

However, some portions of the unique dome still has leaks when it rains even with its recent waterproofing using a special chemical by the contractor in exchange of its project.

Parish priest Fr. Raymond Nivo said the preservation plan, dubbed the "Shell-ter Project," was launched because of the sad state of the thin dome peppered with leaks and watermarks.

"We wanted to make people aware of the physical condition of the church and to arrest the dilapidation of the dome," he said in an interview.

The UP Chapel, the first round-shaped church in the country, was the masterpiece of late National Artists who collaborated in 1955: Leandro Locsin, Arturo Luz, Vicente Manansala, Ang Kiukok and Napoleon Rivera.

Locsin originally designed the church for the Cuenco family who was planning to build it in Negros. Luz designed the "Heart of Life" – the marble design on the chapel floor, while Manansala and Kiukok painted the Stations of the Cross.

Renowned artist Abueva meanwhile designed the altar and the double-sided crucifix which hangs from the dome.

Changing weather

But due to the changing weather in a tropical country, its unique dome had changed from a pearly white to a slightly green hue, streaked with brownish watermarks.

After years of neglect, the dome had suffered peeling paint, cracks, as well as bad acoustics which affect the reverberations inside the church during Mass.

Nivo, upon assuming the chaplaincy in 2006, immediately launched the Shell-ter Project to raise funds for the dome's renovation and the needed repairs on the pews, altar, flooring and the all paintings of the Stations of the Cross.

"The pews have become worn out and some of them have fresh cracks. We also needed to overhaul the electrical system to get rid of the unsightly wires," the parish priest explained.

The fundraising ended this year with a whopping sum of P6.4 million from concerned parishioners on campus and those who regularly hear Mass at the famous chapel.

Setbacks

But the renovation is not without its setbacks, such as the first part of the project which is waterproofing of the dome which cost then (used) P2.4 million.

In 2007, the repairmen used a certain chemical which would prevent water from seeping into the dome, but they soon realized that because of humidity rounds, some parts of the dome still had leaks.

"On the inside of the dome, we had to take care of the bad reverberations so as to improve the sound quality of the speaker during Mass," Nivo shared.

A basic first recommended hanging baffles—square boxes made of foam which

A WORKER fixes the confession room. At left is one of the astronauts on the life of Christ.

EXCLUSIVE
OPENS JANUARY 21
AT GLORIETTA 4 AND
GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

"...a parable of hope and love, it is enchanting..."

"...affecting and emotionally satisfying..."

2009 PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD/
Favorite Movie Drama

glorietta GREENBELT

TITA An Cajimacan serves foodas a soup kitchenfield every Saturday at the parish church.

They'll choose Parañaque anytime over life in the US

By Dulce Fenix-Bayles
Contributor

THEY HAVE BEEN PETITIONED BY relatives to immigrate to the United States. But for visiting Eighteen and Manoring Cruz Llamas, they would rather stay in their hometown, Parañaque City.

"I was born here on Sept. 25, 1930, by midwife, in this house," says Tita An as she is fondly called by everyone, "and I don't intend to exchange my place for another country." An embodiment. Tita An's sow spends her days with her sisters volunteering for parish church activities like bringing priests to the homes of the sick or arranging flowers for Santo Sebastian Chapel.

For Manoring, a former teacher, she was also born by midwife on Feb. 8, 1932, in her home in Filipino Street, near Quirino Avenue in Parañaque City. "I was born here, raised here, grew up here and even got married here," she says of her hometown. After getting married, Manoring and her husband transferred to their own house nearby.

Comfortable

"We are being petitioned by our children abroad but I do not really like to leave, even if there is free medical care there. We are already comfortable with our life here, even with the financial crisis. It's better [for me to] be free to go Sunday's Church daily, located a few kilometers from her house. Tita An would recall the days when the streets seemed only with few vehicles and there's rich orange trees and where everyone knew everybody.

Clean river

The Parañaque River was clean and filled with crayons. At low tide, small islands would appear, and as children, they would call it "lapa-dagat, lapas-dagat" Cited and said, "If we had an island, we would just go to the river and get edible sea shells," says Tita An.

The Fishermen's Wharf on Council Road, seafood factory, used to be an elongated island filled with people. Today, there is no more seashore and has become the coastal road.

"Those were the days when we would play under the moonlight, boys and girls, no malice whatsoever, doing the 'sombang-preso' or hide and seek, near the sea. We would walk during daytime and have picnics along Baseo, lie down on the flowery side of the shore or sips from artificials clean are all around. We were so happy and peaceful then," says Tita An who is known for her "balanbo" (eclectic home in cloth) in having Tagalog.

Halcyon days

She would walk to school which was the La Huerta Elementary School and the Parañaque Elementary School Central for elementary and St. Paul College just across the church for High school.

"At that time, my 'baon' was five centavos and I could already buy, bread with egg and sugar," Manoring's father was a fisherman and her mother, she is not ashamed to say, was a "labandera" (laborer.

Those were halcyon days for Aneling when she never got sick, water was plentiful and could be drunk directly from the faucet as well, and she could go to the nearby market for meals or "pamatay para kuno lang, talaga'y kabuy" and barbecue. At 78, Tita An is grateful she only has mild arthritis "is awa ng Diyos."

There were even bumboteros near the church, the late Dominique and Nine Valdez, both in Quirino Avenue.

Manoring recalls the "banat" or salt beds, which her grandfather, Raymundo de Leon, owned. "We sold it to the SM group." She said that SM hired workers to "remove" and fix/reside the tollbooths and lay the bays.

Manoring also went to school in Pamplanque Elementary School near Bahlinzanan and graduated with a degree in education from the University of Santo Tomas. She retired at age 65 after teaching for 21 years at Aurelio High School followed by 20 years doing research and office work at the Division of City Schools.

Favorite place

Her favorite place to visit is the home of her married son at Sucat. She is pleased with improved garbage collection although the written that parking in front of their house during their court at St. T. Garcia be prohibited as it destroys her plants.

Tita An points to the Sinanan Hall never has beans which has been there since she was a child and the ancestral home of Aida Lopez de Leon Santos which she loved restored by daughter, Hal Santos-Valdez with all its antiques inside, as true historical site she is proud of.

"I love my community," says Tita An, "Always loved here is my city/my friends, classmates and relatives. If we need help, they are there."

CAPESTRANO shows one of her embroidered dresses.

UP parish church renovation

Turn page A19

would disturb the church to carve the rules, but the National Historical Institute vetoed its objection as the right of hanging boats from the ceiling would destroy the "look" of the dome.

Tedious process

"It was really a tedious process, because the church is a historical site, so we had to ask permission for everything we do," the parish priest said earlier.

Arce said they will first concentrate on polishing the carvings, molding of the doors before tackling the other areas to be restored, such as the paintings, pews and electrical wiring.

He pointed out that it would be hard to begin removing the oil paintings if water still kept trickling into the chapel during rainy season.

As a fellow parishioner, the parish asked its flock for patience as the renovation may take a little longer.

"For many years, our church has slowly been deteriorating. But now we are doing something about it. Can we not share the same patience and understanding as in its years of its deterioration?" the priest said in his letter.

Arce, however, pointed out that other than the Pope's Sun penance that the parishioners will try to help restore the church, its structure remains intact.

From the churchgoers who live on campus to outsiders who frequent the chapel on Sundays, the fundraising has raised at least P6.4 million so far from a group.

The parish priest recalled the generosity of an anonymous donor who left an envelope at his office one day. The envelope contained P500,000.

"There has been tremendous support in our parishioners. I was amazed by the amount. The fundraising gained. Maybe the people felt grateful to the church," Arce said.

He added: "Lots of people go to Mass here. Maybe they like the ambiance of the place, or maybe they like the way we celebrate Mass."

The restoration of the stolen chapel has a long way to go. Though the contractors, Apostate, has worked out the church's dome, some bodies still creep through, especially during rough rains.

The priest said he understood the NHA's wish to preserve the original look of the church, but pointed out that the chapel's main function was account for its magnificence.

"We can't preserve glory. But I understand that they want to preserve it because it's a historical style," he conceded.

Though he wants to polish and restore the looks of the antique chapel, this priest wants to keep the "aged feel" at least in one part of the church.

"I guess we will be just cleaning the pews of the yellow dirge and burn candles. I want to maintain its oldness," Arce said.

"I MISS THE WORLD IS ABROAD. The basket bake sale and carinderia to assist their pound of flesh. Eto ang kinakapos nila sa mga pobla. Hay! I miss them! Be normal and full of me (OFWs)."

—JOEL FLORENTINO, March 8, 2007

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

Email it to global_pinoy@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback:
inquirer_text_service@yahoo.com
to 2327 (Globe) or 207 (Smart)

This section is dedicated to Filipinos everywhere toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

Retelling OFW story: Hole at center of the heart

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS When in the Philippines, Bernard Picazo just says home is Kanan, Rosario...all the time with his wife Sally and sons (L) and Benjaye, who's getting married next June this

By Karlo Jose E. Pinoto
Contributor

WHILE OTHERS MAY be wary of working abroad especially since the effects of the global financial crisis are yet to come in full swing, Bernard Picazo, who has worked in four different countries for almost a decade now, remains optimistic in continuing a career overseas.

"It's all about one's mind set and, of course, prayer. I always think there are bigger opportunities out there that's why I keep going. After all, I'm doing this for my family," said Bernard, who added that he feels blessed that the country he is currently working in is barely affected by the worldwide economic debacle.

Bernard, 40, is a piping inspector in Qatar. Before that, he worked in France and Saudi Arabia as a piping foreman and in Bangladesh as expediter. He, too, was once employed in Rabcork Hourly Philippines, which was based in Batangas, his hometown.

Crossing countries

"When I heard the rumors that Rabcork was set to cut down its workforce, I immediately considered working overseas," Bernard recalled. "Even if I was already working there for seven years, I thought the possible would be all workers since the company has become unstable and I had better plans for my family.

"I know these days, that is a common scenario in the Philippines and in other parts of the globe, particularly the USA," he argued, "and I feel bad for my 'kababayans' who suffered and are suffering the woes of this fate. I hope they find their way and get through it."

Bernard left the country in 1997 with Bangladesh as his first stop. From there on, he has had experiences aplenty across countries, from minor adjustments like adapting to climates to first-time encounters like hanging out with some buddies over the bed ties.

'This is the life'

"That was in Yanbu in Saudi!" he exclaimed. "It's like one of those moments when you say, 'Ah, this is the life!' Or those when I get to taste seafood that I've never tasted in my life."

He added, this time relaying his hectic daily routine in France: "There was also a time when I'd cruise for two and a half hours to get to the town proper. The sights along the way were breathtaking."

Of all his overseas endeavors, though, Bernard pointed out Qatar as the best. This was where his salary in France, which was already double the amount of his salary in Saudi and Bangladesh, doubled.

Isn't it ironic!

"Plus, Qatar is an open country so life's easier," he added. "There are malls everywhere, which means more ways to entertain myself and accumulate by-scope homesickness."

For Filipinos willing to a foreign land, homesickness is inevitable as death. Bernard testifies to this, but then his is more agonizing experience to share.

"Homesickness is always there. Every day you miss—but it's always there. To be away from our families is the biggest sacrifice we (OFWs) make. You see, in my 10 years of working abroad, I got to spend Christmas with my family only thrice. And for people who have closely knit family relations, that's too much! The look at the center of our hearts? That's homesickness.

"But then, every time I recall my OFW story, there's this tragedy that supposedly all hanging over pains. Many years have gone, but up to now, it stays fresh in my memory."

In 1999, while Bernard was visiting the Philippines, waiting for the confirmation of another contract, he lost his youngest son, Nikko, to a car accident during the Holy Week. When it happened, he was not there because he was in the Good Friday procession. Ironically, the driver of the car that ran over Bernard's 3-year-old boy was a priest's uncle.

"The next thing I knew, my contract was finalized," he said. "Then there's more years!"

Bernard went on: "Occasionally, before his short passing, would ask me to treat him to a Jollibee kiddie meal, which I wasn't able to do since we were on a tight budget. And then I got the overseas offer. I thought, now that I had the means to buy all those Jollibee toys, it's useless since no one was going to play with them anymore."

Family reunion

Bernard then left for Saudi with a heavy heart. He had to share his leave for still had bills his wife, and Justine, his eldest son, to support. Sally had also given birth to CJ, the youngest member of the family, whom Bernard requested as an angel to alleviate the pain of Nikko's passing.

According to Bernard, his trials have only fueled him to work even harder for his family.

"I can't say when I will stop working as an OFW, but what I know is that whenever there's a better chance for me, consequently for my family, I'll go for it. It doesn't matter where, as long as the salary is good. I mean the best for my family, and I'm willing to take any risk for them.

"But, of course, like everyone else, I would like to finally settle in our country and be with my loved ones. It's blissful when you get to share a meal three times a day with them on the same table. I'm just waiting for the time. But I'm financially stable, I'd then establish a business in Batangas, perhaps have some apartments for others to rent," said Bernard, who is proud that he has now bought his own highend laptop and a 220-square meter lot in Batangas which he earmarked to pay in installment.

'Little blessings'

Moreover, he recently acquired a residence visa, which, according to him, makes him a regular resident in Qatar. Under the said visa, which entitles him to continued work usually running at the three-month period, the resident visa gives Bernard the security he needs especially in the global economy is tough.

At present, Bernard is set to visit the country that awards to attend the wedding of his 18-year-old son, Benjaye. He finished Interior Design in college and is getting together not just with his family but also with the rest of his entire clan, most recently his parents for whom he built a lot his choice. "I remember coaching their basketball team in the summer leagues in our town. It was fun!"

"You don't make out on those little blessings," he said. "The family's going to get bigger, the challenges a little bit tougher, but...so I've said the expectations are just out there. We just have to go and get them!"

THE PIPEMAN IN QATAR Picazo has been working on pipes ever since he got a job in how different scenarios for the past 10 years. "Before, I'd check dirty work like repairing and maintaining pipes. Now, it is I who check and inspect the work of others."

Dutch treat: She's into migrants' lives

By Erika Sauler

ONLINE SHOT FILIPINO DEVOto women to the need to make money. Melo Padilla left the Philippines—out of a sense of "adventure" which led to three decades of working for various organizations that help migrants in Europe.

"I could have been rich, but I became an activist," Padilla said the happiness in you or the misfortunes of the Promised Action Day last October where she raised issues confronting Filipino women in Europe ranging from labor and legal problems to relationship and marital concerns.

The migrant women's forum is one of the activities of the millionstrong Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights (GAM) held in parallel to the GFMD to promote a rights-based framework, which is said to be lacking in the latter's agenda. The Global Forum on Migration and Development was held in Manila from Oct. 27 to 31.

Even though Padilla represented Solidarity Philippine Women's Network in Europe at the NGA convention, she attended it of her own initiative and without organizational funding. "I was volunteered to be a speaker. Fortunately, I know most of the organizers," she said. Bahaylonia's group of organizations committed to women empowerment and service to the community.

The decision to advocate migrant issues was not borne out of Padilla's personal experience as a migrant but because of her belief that "the problem is structural." She criticized the promotion of labor export time-and-time as permanent to the workers' welfare and the use of remittances to service foreign debts instead of investing it to create jobs so that Filipinos won't have to leave home to other countries.

Wrong labor policy

"As a political activist in Holland, I saw that the labor export policy is wrong and migration is used by the government to keep the economy afloat," she said.

Padilla's life abroad started in the 1970s when the war incited by martial law prompted her to leave as a representative of the Student Christian Movement. "It was more like an adventure. I had just graduated from college and in the youngest child, I had no one to support. I have no commitment to the Philippines," she said.

After the conference in Geneva, she stayed for a few months as intern in the youth department of the World Council of Churches (WCC) where she got in touch with youth organizations across Europe and which exposed her to the worldwide phenomena of immigration and human rights violations.

In the course of her work, she met a Dutch who became her boyfriend and after four years in WCC, she went to Holland "to see if the relationship would work."

It didn't.

The failed romance did not deter her from staying in Holland and getting involved in solidarity work. This time, she met Evert de Boer, a Dutch development worker who lived in Pasay City for a time.

"He knows political issues in the Philippines better than I do," Padilla said. "He solidarity work in the Philippines is his passion. He met and became Philippine-patriot."

They connected with each other and eventually got married. This year is his fourteenth month. "It's keeping my own identity. But, you know, it would be a long discussion because even my surname is my father's."

Dr. Boer and Padilla now have a teenage son and daughter. When their children were just toddlers, she talked to them in Tagalog "so they would know what they are not just Dutch, they are also Filipinos."

"I instilled in them that it's not a handicap to have a migrant background," she said.

Pinays in Holland

Padilla also worked for Stichting Philippine Women's Center for 18 years. Its position is a service institution which aims to empower Filipino women in the Netherlands. It offers help with their legal and emotionality problems. "Even the Dutch husbands or boyfriends ask us if they have problems with their Filipino partners," she said.

In the 1990s, Padilla encountered many women migrant issues and the development of a migrant feminist agenda. "We focused on the gender discussion of migration, what it means for both sexes, but especially for women because there is the phenomenon of feminization of migration. Women are more affected," she said.

But the definition of the migrant feminist agenda is still under discussion to accommodate the issues confronting migrant women such as right of marriage, economic problems and labor discrimination. "We are already closely-managed as women, then, there's sex, colored skin and the language handicap," she said.

Padilla's wide-ranging experience provides a lot of stories about migrants' lives. One she remembered well was the case of three Filipino women in their 20s she found in somewhere wearing only shirts and jeans in the minus cold. They were on their way to the border but, apparently, they were falsely recruited and their false entry was discovered in Turkey so they were deported to Amsterdam.

Padilla and the other social workers in the town it would be impossible to get to Rome because the Dutch government's policy severely restricts immigrants through the help of relatives in Rome. The two were still able to cross the borders while the third stayed in Amsterdam as an undocumented worker.

"They told us they saved every money they had saved to go [to Rome] and was received, while [the] girl used the money to shop a small business? Maybe they would not send to their home," Padilla recalled.

The anxiety that torments undocumented workers clouds Padilla as right of work fully removed. Women are also discriminated. "We are already disadvantaged as women, then, there's sex, colored skin and the language handicap," she said.

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The anxiety that torments undocumented workers clouds Padilla

PADILLA "I could have been rich, but I became an activist."

in. "Data freedom of movement is curtailed. They don't vote their men. They are commuting and always in fear of being caught. All these and more while still working very hard just to be able to send money to their families," she said.

"I take my freedom for granted. But for them, it's a matter of life and death," she added.

And so, Padilla's commitment to advocate for the welfare of migrants, documented and undocumented alike. She joins fellow activists in calling on the government to treat migrants, not as commodities, but as people with rights.

The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Queen

Israel may halt Gaza war, ignore Hamas demands

GAZA—ISRAELI WARPLANES RETURNED TO THE ATTACK ON the Gaza Strip before first light on Saturday as leaders of the Jewish state weighed a unilateral ceasefire.

Political sources said a decision could come by evening. The government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert may declare a halt to the three-week-old offensive without concluding any deal with Hamas-led militants who control Gaza, they said.

Reeling a night of sporadic gunfire, the roar of jet aircraft was followed by heavy explosions flashing over points to the south and north of the city of Gaza.

The Israeli army said 50 targets were hit, including 36 tunnels, two mosques from which troops were fired on, three bunkers, eight rocket-launching pads and six armed men including a booby-trapped building.

A spokesperson had no immediate comment on a report that two civilians were killed over a school. About 45,000 Gazans are displaced in 1.5% enclaves in the enclave.

More than 1,150 Palestinians have been killed and 5,300 wounded since Israel began attacking Gaza with air in blitz on Dec. 27, then moved in with ground forces a week later.

A large majority of the dead were civilians.

Ten Israeli soldiers have died in the fighting and three Israeli civilians have been killed by rockets fired from Gaza.

Olmert summoned his security Cabinet for Saturday night to decide on a ceasefire, which would come less than 72 hours before the inauguration of Barack Obama as US president.

Israel now wish to avoid casting any cloud on a historic day for its main ally. Support at home for its offensive has been almost total but near the world seems to end the bloodshed.

An overwhelming majority of states at the UN General Assembly called on Friday for an immediate, durable ceasefire in what diplomats described as a calamitous, tardious world viewpoint that would strengthen Egyptian mediating efforts.

The unending pain of Gaza civilians is at no harrowing.

Israeli television on Friday broadcast the desperate cries for help of a Palestinian doctor who called an Israeli TV station to say his children had just been killed.

"I want to know why they were killed, who gave the order?" he al-Dean Abed Rabbo cried via a voice dialing with emotion.

Troops have helped the family's ambulance including a booby-trapped building.

Dismissing reports of "proportionate" response, Israel attack on Dec. 27 with a "shock and awe" night of bombing and has used devastating firepower every day since to stop militants firing rockets at Israeli civilians in southern cities.

The rockets have injured old but not caused this Friday at least 15 rockets and mortar shells hit Israel, wounding five.

Israeli strikes on Friday killed 30 Gazans, including an Islamic Jihad commander, Tarik Ibn Ali the home of a Hamas militant, killing his wife and five children, but not him.

Israeli sources said Egyptian mediation with Hamas was not progressing, but Israel may believe it has won "tougher Hamas a truce," as Olmert described in site, and prefer to simply stop rather than give Hamas the satisfaction of a negotiated deal.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, hoping to succeed Olmert when Israel votes on Feb. 11, said on Friday that an end to the war "doesn't have to be in agreement with Hamas but rather in arrangements against Hamas."

Reuters

THE WEST FRONT of the Capitol in Washington in photo taken Jan. 16, during an early morning rehearsal for President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration ceremony. AFP

Obama kicks off inauguration celebrations

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT-ELECT Barack Obama kicks off his three-day "Whistle Stop Tour" on Saturday retracing Abraham Lincoln's historic 1861 journey by train from Philadelphia to Washington.

Obama will spend in Philadelphia around 10 a.m. on Saturday before he and his family depart on their journey accompanied by a group of "everyday Americans" who have met Obama or Vice President-elect Joe Biden or some point and told them something story.

Capacity crowds are expected at Monday's historic celebrations in Washington and the 217-kilometer trip, railway stops along the way, is aimed at allowing as many people as possible to participate in the celebrations.

On Friday Obama made a pitch for his massive economic stimulus plan at a Midwestern factory that manufactures road-surface parts, saying his proposal would help create solid jobs in up-and-coming industries.

"Renewable energy isn't something pie in the sky. It's not part of a far-off future. It's happening all across American right now," Obama told workers on Friday in Fort Cleveland suburb. "It can create millions of additional jobs and revive us industries if we act right now."

Just days before taking the oath of office as the 44th president, Obama used the factory as a backdrop as he sought to generate support from the public—constituents of skeptical lawmakers and Democrats in Congress—for his pricey plan to pull the country out of recession.

Obama held the campaign-style event a day after the Senate agreed to give him access to the second half of last fall's $700 billion financial industry bailout and House Democrats unveiled an $825 billion stimulus package.

One of the largest bills ever to come to way through Congress, it calls for federal spending of roughly $550 billion and tax cuts of $275 billion over the next two years to revive the shaky economy. It also focuses heavily on energy, education, health care and jobs producing highway construction.

Seeking to counter critics' claims of excessive spending and too few tax cuts, Obama said the package is necessary to create long-lasting, well-paying jobs in industries such as alternative energy, and helping fund the beleaguered unions such as Ohio now and in the future.

"It's not too late to change course...but only if we take decisive, bold action as soon as possible," Obama said. He pledged: "The first job of my administration is to put people back to work and get our economy moving again."

AP

Free World Slasher tickets for Thunderbird users

The World Slashers Cup, for the first time ever, will be made available to mass-based cockers and gamefowl breeders who are users of Thunderbird Power Feeds and Thunderbird Power Vet products.

"We are extremely grateful to Thunderbird for bringing the World Slashers Cup closer to the masses", stated Araneta Center COO Manny Asacador.

For each derby day, the first 500 aficionados who will bring with them 2 empty sacks of Thunderbird Bexan XP and 2 empty packs of Thunderbird Platinum may watch the World Slasher Cup for free and be able to witness world-class pit action and see their favorite cockfighting heroes including the members of the Thunderbird Winning Team in person.

"This is our way of thanking the backyard breeders for trusting Thunderbird as the winning formula. They have made us the runaway leader", Product Manager Francis Martinez stated.

Set at the Araneta Coliseum, the much-awaited international derby is slated from January 19-24. Separate 2-cock eliminations will be held on Jan. 19 & 20; 2-cock semis on Jan. 21 & 22, while the finals take center stage on the 24th.

This 2009 edition is the biggest ever with more than 200 entries set to see action which is the reason why this year's event was spread as a five-day affair instead of the usual three-day format.

Heated pit action will start early at 10:00 a.m. Thunderbird users may claim their free tickets at the Red gate starting at 9:00 a.m.

WORLDBRIEFS

Suicide attack in Kabul kills 4

KABUL—A suicide car bomb exploded outside the biggest US military base in the Afghan capital on Saturday, killing two US soldiers and two Afghans and wounding 16 people, Afghan and US officials said. The Taliban movement claimed responsibility for the blast, which was near the German Embassy and UN offices. It was the first attack on Kabul this year after a series of bloody incidents in 2008.

AFP

5 US deaths linked to Salmonella

WASHINGTON—Five deaths have been linked to an outbreak of Salmonella food poisoning linked to peanut butter, but this strain received to not particularly virulent, US health officials said on Friday. Larry Bohlen, vice president of the con, Peanut Corporation of America, said it had been informed by the Food and Drug Administration that some samples of its products had tested positive for Salmonella. The company expanded its recall and immediately ceased all production at the suspect facility. Kellogg Co said late on Friday it was recalling certain products that "have the potential to be contaminated." Among some Austin and Keebler branded peanut butter snacks and some Famous Amos and Keebler Soft Batch cookies. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 652 infections had been reported in 43 states and said more cases could be expected. Not case was reported in Canada.

Reuters

Bin Laden son believed to be in Pakistan

WASHINGTON—A son of Osama bin Laden who spent years under Iranian house arrest has left Iran and is now probably operating inside Pakistan, a senior US intelligence official said on Friday. The son, Saad bin Laden, is one of a number of senior operatives of al Qaeda detained inside Iran in recent years. US officials have long said that over the most circumstances of their captivity, but they believe that Iran was holding the militants in part as a deterrent against a Israeli attack on Iranian soil. Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence, told reporters on Friday that Saad bin Laden was probably in Pakistan. He gave no details about whether Bin Laden had escaped from custody, whether his departure reflected a deal between Iran and al-Qaida or whether he was simply let go by Iranian officials.

AFP

Kyrgyzstan to close US airbase

BISHKEK—Kyrgyzstan will order the closure of a US military airbase used to support operations in Afghanistan "in a matter of days" under pressure from Russia, a senior Kyrgyz official said. "The presidential decree on the annulment of the agreement with the United States is already prepared. In a matter of days it will be published in the Kyrgyz media," the official said. The official said Russia had urged Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev to announce the closure of the base in exchange for financial help to the cash-strapped Central Asian nation. Russian officials have also issued unending Kyrgyzstan a $300-million loan as well as $1.7 billion of investment in the energy sector of the ex-Soviet republic.

AFP

In a split second, pilot becomes a hero

NEW YORK—CHESLEY B. Sullenberger III had just performed a remarkable feat of flying. Some were calling it a miracle. But, Chesley, as he would soon tell the glare, waiting room at the New York Presbyterian overlook on Pier 79, speaking to police officials. His navy blue pilot's uniform had barely a wrinkle. His wispy gray hair and David Letterman mustache were unruffled.

"He is: he wasn't even bothered," said Edward Shykes, a deputy mayor of New York City, who stood nearby.

Michael Ballweg, the cause's public safety director, check the pilot's hand and thanked him for a job done brilliantly: the precise, safe, throwing-avoidance of a 58-ton jetliner in the Hudson River.

"He said to me, in the most unruffled, humble way he says, 'That's what we're trained to do,'" Ballweg said. "No boasting, no emotion, no soothing."

Sullenberger, 57, the US Airways pilot who safely ditched the disabled Airbus A320 passenger plane on the Hudson River on Thursday, had been with the airline nearly 30 years and was steeped to the safety side of the industry.

He had worked with federal aviation officials investigating crashes and improving training and methods for evacuating aircraft in emergencies. He got his pilot's license as a teenager, flew F-4 Phantom jets for the Air Force, and was a 1973 graduate of the Air Force Academy, where he received the Outstanding Cadet in Aviation award.

SULLENBERGER III is cadet in the US Air Force Academy.

Sullenberger also received the Flight Safety Foundation's Professionalism Award, given to the top flier in each graduating class.

On Friday in Danville, Calif., his wife Lorrie Sullenberger stopped briefly to talk to reporters on her lawn as the ambulance bus two daughters off to school on Friday morning.

"My husband has said since years that it is highly unlikely for any pilot to have an incident in his or her career, let alone something like this," she said. "So I was stunned when he called and said there's been an incident, and your then I thought maybe it was a toy that maybe had bumped the airplane. Your mind never goes to something like this."

John Cox, a former safety representative with Sullenberger for the Air Line Pilots Association, said his friend personified what you wanted in a professional pilot.

"He's extremely talented as an aviator, and he's had very good training," Cox said, "and it all came together on that landing in the Hudson." AFP

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Sunday BIZ

Mobile Alert Service: [illegible] | E-mail: [illegible] | Website: [illegible]

ALICE SHAKTA owns Namaste Philippines, which sells wares from Nepal (left).

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Fight global recession with jade

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—SHOCKED BY THE CRUSHing global recession, there's only one thing business owners need to know at the start of the year: Jade.

And another thing: Tourmaline.

Alice Shakya, proprietor of Namaste Philippines in Porta Vaga Mall in Baguio City, says jade and tourmaline are the two most important stones that one can have to weather the recession.

"For the homes or offices, you need to hang jade chunks. For your body you need to wear tourmaline," Shakya says.

Jade is known the world over as an ornamental stone, but Shakya says that long slim jade or earrings of the eight auspicious Chinese symbols (pansit, golden fish, victory banners, vase, vessels, eternal knot, white lotus and the wheel of Dharma) are preferred.

"Hang them on the left side of your house or office because that is the part that is more sacred," she says.

She says that choosing the lucky stones for the year was decided upon by Eastern permanents.

"These two stones were chosen in the light of the dark forecast brought by the financial recession. Jade and tourmaline possess strong energy to help us tackle the crisis," she says.

TOURMALINE necklace valued at P12,000

Since the start of 2009, Namaste Philippines has been busy with business people

Jade, tourmaline possess powerful energy to help tackle the crisis

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Priest converts people to organic farming

By Madonna S. Virola
Inquirer Northern Luzon

CITY OF CALAMBA...MAY! Sandoval and his wife Marlene used to borrow money from usurers when times were difficult. Now, they have found a new way...and a new life...as organic vegetable farmers.

"We were able to pull themselves out of a P5,000 debt to Nicholas [town] through earnings from vegetable sales from Diamond Sagip Farm," says Fr. Gil Raymundo, parish priest in Barangay Mamugaí here.

Among 24 in the caretaker of Sagip, one of three farms Raymundo put up last year. Two other young families are in charge of the Mamugaí and Biga farms.

Farm trustee

The priest finds fulfillment in being able to help people by providing livelihood and training them "to be simple, patient, determined and hardworking."

Also, he converts as many people as he can to organic farming.

Raymundo, 42, comes from a farming family, but his siblings had sold him to "new owners [who rejected] me."

On April 17, 2004, he was assigned to the parish in Mamugaí, thinking there where, he says, "I can move on from."

Then God called him! Last year, Fr. Gil decided to ask for carnivorous vendors when they had technically moved on."

So the priest was overjoyed when Cabanatuan Bishop Sofronio Cabaldo entrusted to him a hectare of unproductive farm near his convent.

Raymundo turned the property into a model farm, applying what he learned from the late

FR. GIL Raymundo (from left), his brother Joebert and caretaker Jimmy are busy harvesting produce.

PAPPIN and tomatoes ordered in the market. With spontaneous organic vegetable farming, plants can cope with rain and bad weather.

FR. GIL Raymundo at the Sagut organic vegetable farm in the city of Calapan.

...ner agriculture magazines and farmer friends.

His arsenal? peppers and peppers, and build the harvest in Diversoria, Manila. The earnings rebuilded the two-hectare downcast farm in Biga. 3 Albuerines away, along the Talong Republic National Highway.

Eleven kilometers away is the two-hectare Sagut vegetable farm and nursery. There, Pappinsals hired Almajen Mangcon farmers-without jobs.

The Mamugaí farm caught the attention of government technocrats because of its yields. A plant of long pepper, for instance, can yield a maximum of 2.5 kilos. At P15 a kilo, the plant can earn around P1,500.

Some 500 square feet are tilled. The fruit sells at P13 a kilo. Harvesting is done every ten days.

Best-selling crop

Hot peppers sells from P200 to P500 a kilo during the peak season of September to December, according to Raymundo.

Their cropping season, I will plant more, if not all, but that," he says.

A long dish roll is a favorite at Sunliner Beach Resort in Calapan. The dish is cooked using lamb, stuffed with cheese, ground pork, salted sausage, fish or shrimp, before it is deep-fried. Hot tempura.

"Farming is expensive [in the beginning," says Raymundo.

He supplies 10 to 20 people everyday to prepare the soil in a hectare of land for a week. "We're spared from the P5,000 per sack of chemical fertilizer, with all its side effects," he says.

Before tending to his farm, Raymundo spends time in the village, working with the farmers in early as dawn. "Of course, I save on coffee and breakfast," he says.

With a Toyota Hilux van that was the bishop's service vehicle two years ago, Raymundo helps collect organic wastes in the city on [around 9 a.m. To get more fertilizer materials, he visits every month the city dump in Barangay Bintan, which he has named "St. Francis Assisi-San Guinigaro," after the patron saint of the poor.

He helps segregate garbage, touched by the poverty of the people who struggle to live while exposing their health to diseased food odor.

Raymundo spends the wastes to the city's chamber and hostess, plates, vanities and even cut other from his neighbors.

After the garbage arrives between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. every Sunday, the priest celebrates Mass at 11 a.m.

Almost 70 garbage collectors attend the Mass.

Raymundo always includes in his homilies the beatitudes for the poor, "Mapapalad ang mahirap ... ik mapapalad ang Diyos, mangot Siya sa atin, nariyan ang Pangginoon sa atin ang [Blessed are the poor ... for God will not forsake them, He is near us...dwelling among the poor]."

Parish work

Every Friday afternoon, the community conducts Bible sharing and prays the novena and rosary.

Raymundo and his friends are inspired by the Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan's program—"Hiping ng Panalong Mandorello"—which caters to the spiritual and the material needs of Mindoro families.

Rundo and Gemma Bonoza of Barangay Bayanan II, for

[continued on page B4]

In Baguio, garden condos set to rise

By Dorrie Cobiz
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—WHEREVER OLD-timers here get wind of a new property project in the city, they come on strong, expressed reservations, asking: Allowed in the name of development.

But a homegrown real estate company is sweet. Dev enough to incorporate the "old Baguio" charm in its condominium projects here.

The Courtyards is the first garden condominium to rise in the summer capital, said Alexander Bangayan, president and chief executive officer of Solvers Land Capital Inc.

"We believe that it is possible to develop a property ... without cutting any trees," Bangayan said. "What we did was to enhance the environment. We were the ones who adjusted to [the given environment] rather than the reverse [for the project]."

He said all persons of the project site would be used for the actual structure to preserve the area's natural environment. He said for that reason, more space where it could [place additional] 1,000 pine trees.

"What we are doing is to instill [Baguio] people in the idea of smart place development. The project is being undertaken by local developers who can steal big developers in Metro Manila. One of our missions is to be

IMAGE of the garden condominium project

A MODEL room showcases the unit's view of trees and peaceful surroundings

Oktober.com will rise a garden condominium with amenities, a first in Baguio.

COURTYARDS gate

globally competitive," he said.

According to Bangayan, Godson Land offers affordable but quality real estate, which will cater to the middle class. A basic studio unit [20 square meters] costs P1.5 million; a one-bedroom unit [29 sqm.], P1.8 million; and a two-bedroom unit [56 sqm.], P2.3 million.

Units categorized under standard and premium may cost P1.4 million to P2.6 million, depending on the size of the area and the number of bedrooms.

The Courtyards, Bangayan said, offers the only Baguio project with country club amenities. It has an American country home inspired design and will also use a 1.85-hectare property in Antipolo, Batangas Arevra Hill here.

He said 11,230 square meters, or 50 percent of the given land area, would be allotted to open spaces, while the rest would only sell about 7,407 square meters.

The Courtyards' development, he said, would be divided into three phases: The Cobiza, The Manor and The Ledges, which would be completed in 2012.

The Courtyards' attraction is its natural surroundings, Bangayan said.

Among its amenities are, a beaver dam that will be built on a brook that crosses the property, a boardwalk and a bridge for residents and visitors will be built over the brook that could serve as a fishing spot; a picnic grove, a barbecue area, a [illegible] area, a strawberry garden and an organic garden for lingsia vegetables; and a waterfall created out of a hilly portion of the property.

The Courtyards will also offer a garden-wedding area, a village clubcity and coffee shop, spa, beauty center and a gym.

CEO retires to smell the coffee

From page B4

a good friend that a coffee boat will soon had been considered, and all these have contributed to the highest selling point.

Tony takes a meticulous approach to coffee his restaurant coffee collection is presented. He has a new design for gift packages and boasts reviews. He also has introduced new forms of packaging including resealable canisters.

Ironically, as Tony's Tomatoes boutique, the brewed coffee served, a priced a lot cheaper compared to other cafes. But Tony does not mind even if the returns do not guarantee that he will become an instant millionaire.

"The biggest payback," Tony says, is to see that "people appreciate your products. This cannot be measured in pesos and cents."

SM expands GreenBag . . .

From page B4

premalls establishment.

For every sale of the new SM Supermalls GreenBag, a peso goes to a charitable institution, reflecting a further environment for all.

The new GreenBags are available at the Event Center GreenBag Booth in all SM Supermalls nationwide from Jan. 16, 2009 to April 30, 2009.

The use of the SM Supermalls GreenBags also has its perks. SM Advantage cardholders are automatically entitled to two points upon presentation of their SM Advantage card. If they use the new SM Supermalls GreenBag at any SM Supermarket and/or Hypermarket.

"We are taking SM Supermalls to greater heights as we bring the SM Supermall GreenBag not just to our supermarket customers but now to our valued shoppers in all SM Supermalls all over the country. To date, we give shopping a new dimension. It is now Eco-shopping with a purpose," says Annie Tobias, president, Shopping Centre Management Corp.

This year's launch of the SM Supermalls GreenBag is a culmination of the environment, attended by top executives of SM and Unilever, a staunch supporter of the SM GreenBag initiative. Government representatives, nongovernmental organizations, SM's business partners and the media were also present during the event.

Gapuz: A name nurses have come to swear by

By Michelle V Ramos

THE GLOBAL TOP SCORER in the 2008 Nursing Licensure Examination has been the biggest blow to ever hit the Gapuz Review Center Co., one of the country's leading institutions that assist nursing graduates hoping to secure professional licenses.

That year, Gapuz Review Center was accused of leaking test answers to nursing graduates who took the licensure exams, blotting its reputation.

Integrity

While that experience affected the integrity of the review center, it hasn't stopped Ray Gapuz Jacinto, it's chair and head reviewer, not ashamed about renaming the company's name, ignoring proposals for the adoption of a new one.

"I am a Gapuz and I am proud of that name," says Ray to "Pinay" Gapuz Jr., who hails from Dagupan City in Pangasinan. "Changing the company name would have meant admission of guilt."

Now, more than five years since she founded Ray, Ray tells the business in an interview that the family business is in great shape.

Ray says, that Gapuz Center has since been cleared of allegations of cheating, and it now holds its head up high as it claims to have the biggest number shares in the licensure of examinees nursing reviews.

She says that the company has kept the confidence of its clients throughout the examinations. The company survived the scandal with grace, Ray says, becoming with pride.

"What we did was, we just said our piece after there was no cheating that happened anywhere [in the country]," Ray says.

The company then refused to engage in the mudslinging that went on among their competitors, competitors said the scandal, he explains.

Ray recalls say after he drinks were behind what he calls "black propaganda" against Gapuz Center. But he stresses that more than half of nursing graduates every year choose the review Gapuz to deliver the services in the future.

That fact is owned by competitors per se every about Gapuz, Ray says.

Asked about the company's secret in attracting more nursing graduates than others review centers, Ray is quick to answer "quality and credibility."

Credibility aside, Ray says, Gapuz Center is the most awarded nursing review facility in the country.

GAPUZ

Gapuz Center was recognized as one of the country's "Superbrands" in 2008, he says.

He credits this to the innovative ways Gapuz Center conducts its services.

For instance, he says, Gapuz Center has developed software and computer-based games that will help sharpen the memory of people taking reviews at their facility. Ray says the review center does not confine itself in traditional methods of conducting reviews.

Ray is nursing board topnotcher in 1992, is himself one of the instructors at Gapuz Center. He says the review center puts premium on excellence in conducting reviews, the way he reinforced academic excellence as a student.

Academic supplement

He has a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Santo Tomas, where he graduated cum laude in 1992. He also has a master degree in nursing and graduated summa cum laude from the same university in 1998.

Ray also has a published book, entitled "NCLEX in a Flash," which provides academic supplement to nursing graduates who are reviewing for their licensure exams.

Ray also was included in the 2008 edition of Marquis' "Who's Who in the World." But nursing and nursing remain his top priority.

He received the Young Global Leaders Award for Entrepreneurship in 2006 from Fielders & Maynard Inc.—one of several awards conferred to him.

Ray has conducted reviews outside the country—including Dubai, India, Indonesia, China and Ireland—in response to requests from academic institutions and groups of nursing graduates abroad.

Ray is proud to say that his parents have a huge influence on his academic achievement and success in running the family business.

"My parents stressed the importance of education, and they were very entrepreneurial," says Ray, who holds a doctorate degree in entrepreneurial management.

He shares that, as a kid, he usually see his parents running either a barber shop, a bakery, a convenience store or operating a jeepney.

He has four siblings, two of whom are twins, one is an engineer and another a dentist, Ray says.

But of the five Gapuz children, Ray is the one who got their parent's knack for running a business. While engineer from Far Eastern University after graduating from college.

The business was not an instant hit. Ray says that in the first five years of operations, the Gapuz Center suffered from lack of enrollees. Not only was the company name unpopular then, the demand for nurses was not as great as it is now.

Despite the rough start, Ray says he and his family continued the business.

He says he believes in the principle "work from your heart, work for your dream, and when it comes, hit it big."

Sticking for its dream definitely served Gapuz Center well. After the chalk, first few years, Ray says, the review center then grew by leaps and bounds, thanks to the spike in demand for nurses and the hard work he and family had invested in building up the review center.

Gapuz Center now has branches in Metro Manila and the provinces. Soon, Ray says, it will set up branches abroad.

The company is working on expanding to countries in North America and Asia, he adds.

One thing that Ray expects in setting people succeed, and knowing that somehow Gapuz Review Center has a part in their parent's success.

He says it pleases him to hear stories of nurses who took their reviews at Gapuz and who have made it big abroad.

"Hearing goods news like that is a joy that money can't buy," Ray says.

Looking back at the company's history, Ray concludes that hard work, hopes success, and something good can't be put down.

"Life is in rules. It gives back what you deserve," Ray says.

Fight global recession with jade

From page B1

and collectors (this is the only store in the Philippines specializing in Nephrite and Tibetan ores and crafts) looking for luck.

"Most are looking for traditional good luck charms like chinky pulsbos or orange-peanut-and-coins," Hodaya says.

She says jade is known to attract good luck and friendship and is more associated with the heart chakra or the body's energy centers.

Aside from the ring shot jade, which sells from P400 to P3,000 for a plain one chosen, Hosanna also sells jade beads. The most expensive is the Burmese jade, which sells for P495 a bead.

Tourmaline is a crystal of various colors and comes mainly from Sri Lanka, Brazil, Africa, United States, Australia, Afghanistan and India.

A shamanic stone, tourmaline is traditionally used to point to the center of variable, Hodaya says. It also aligns the body chakras.

Black tourmaline protects against radiation from cellphones and other electromagnetic emitting gadgets, she says.

For business success, yellow tourmaline (pink enriched in green) and green are preferred, Hodaya says.

Her tourmaline bends sell for P50 each. She also has an elaborately designed necklace of tourmaline of different hues selling for P12,000.

With all the jade and tourmaline in her store, Hodaya has all the business luck she could receive.

A Baguio girl, the former Alice Aquino was a Philippine merchandiser to South Asia in the 1990s when she met her husband, a Nepalese artisan. Together they established Mountain Bazaar in Kathmandu, which is now the biggest in Nepal.

Hodaya also hosted the Team Everest Philippines, which climbed the highest peak in 2000 and 2007.

Mountain Philippines opened in 2009 and has created a loyal following in her and in Metro Manila.

Other than semi-precious stones, Mountain also sells masks, metal crafts and Tibetan and Nepalese traditional crafts, prayer wheels and carvings. Handcrafted are bee beads, necklaces and pashmina scarves.

SINCE opening in 2005, Mountain has earned a following

NOTICE OF EXERCISE OF CALL OPTION

Philippine National Bank

GLOBAL NOTE

Series A
Php 2,865,000,000

Series B
Php 135,000,000

12.5% Subordinated Notes Due 2014
Issued 16 February 2004, Due 16 February 2014
Call Option Date: 17 February 2009
Book Closure Date: 1 February 2009

As approved by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on 08 January 2009, Philippine National Bank advises Noteholders of its Series A & B Tier 2 Notes of its exercise of the Call Option and hereby redeems all of the outstanding Notes amounting to Php 2,865,000,000 (Series A) and Php 135,000,000 (Series B) on the Call Option Date.

The Call Option Amount shall be the face value of the Notes plus accrued interest at the Interest Rate.

There shall be no more secondary trading of the Notes or modifications in the accounts after the Book Closure Date.

Please contact Ms. Janelle Vivien R. Reyes or Adora A. Yanga of Banco de Oro Unibank, Inc. Trust & Investment Group Stock Transfer Department at telephone numbers 878-4053 and 878-4052,respectively.

(Sgd.) Carmen G. Huang, EVP & CFO
Philippine National Bank

Sunday BIZ

SM expands GreenBag concept

SM SUPERMALLS YESTERDAY UNveiled the new SM Supermalls GreenBag as part of its efforts to become a model corporate citizen.

Launched under the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) campaign called SM Cares, the SM Supermalls Greenbag enables shoppers to participate in the global cause to reduce the use of nonbiodegradable plastic shopping bags.

Made from polypropylene material, the SM Supermalls Greenbag is recyclable and reusable.

The Greenbag's size is equivalent to **two regular shopping bags and can last** for two years.

Last year, SM Supermarkets and Uniwide partnered to launch the SM Greenbag in all SM supermarkets and **hypermarkets.**

This year's introduction of the SM Supermalls Greenbag extends to a greater number of shoppers.

This time, the Greenbag will be **available to mall goers in four deliberent** exclusive designs by world-renowned artist Manuel Baldemor—taking shopping into a higher level with social responsibility and style rolled into one.

"I am very happy, honored and proud to have partnered with SM Supermalls to exclusively design the new SM Supermalls Greenbag. This initiative is **parallel to my personal advocacy for the** environment," says Baldemor.

SM shoppers may get a Baldemor collectible SM Supermalls Greenbag for only P35 with every P500 single or **accumulated receipt purchase and/or** any proof of purchase at any SM Su-

DR ESPINOSA, B2

CEO retires to smell the coffee

Former exec gives entrepreneurship a try

By Chapin Medina
Inquirer intern

NOT WANTING TO just twiddle his thumbs after retiring from the corporate world, Antonio "Tony" Sevilla decided to open a coffee boutique. "I wanted to be able to showcase Philippine products, and I saw our coffee was to be the best product," he says.

What he had to mind was not in the mold of buchacks or UCC or Vigan.

"In my travels, I noticed that most countries carried their own coffee trademarks. In the Caribbean, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Italy even the United States this did not really grow its own coffee, I would see packed coffee bearing the country's name," he says.

Together with his brother Eddie, Tony spent hours researching on locally grown coffee. From modern, to harvest-time coffee grown in the Mt. Province, Bukidnon, Davao and Tagaytay, and even their respective **histories.**

"Do you know that the Spanish friars introduced Arabica in Baguio?" he says.

The business of coffee fascinated Tony so much that he joined an association of small independent roasters in the United States, and attended their conventions to know everything he can about the industry.

In Japan, he studied the drip method of preparing a coffee drink. He even went to Kobe, the home of UCC, to observe its specialists.

"I also heard about charcoal roasting in Japan," he says.

SEVILLA wants to showcase the best of Philippine coffee

At home, he started researching brews. He would mix different coffee beans to come up with blends, taking into account such basic tasting/aroma attributes—corners, aroma, and flavor. Tony even learned how best to roast coffee using stove, oven and charcoal.

In 2004, it was show time for everything that Tony and Eddie had been working on.

Ortigas & Co. was opening Tectectan, a village-type mall in Pasig City committed in promoting anything Filipino-made. The management liked Tony's concept of selling different blends of coffee from beans solely grown in the Philippines, and offered him a stall.

Tony and Eddie worked quickly on a packaging for the coffee blends, and came up with different designs that distinctly represented the region where the beans came from. They bought imported foil for the packs, and even purchased a vacuum packing machine.

True to their objective of promoting Philippine-grown coffee, the brothers called the company Philippine Mountain Coffee Collection Inc.

The original intention was simply to sell the blend coffee in packs. To entice people to buy, they sold **brewed coffee at a low price of P50.**

"In Japan," according to Tony, "the boutiques passed any small cups for free to entice people to buy the ground coffee in packs. That would not have worked in the Philippines."

Eventually, they raised the price to P55 after spotting the serving in magnitude. This time, customers were making it a habit to have their coffee fix in the comfortable and spacious hall fronting the boutique.

Cookies, croissants, pan de sal and other pastries followed, slightly **changing the boutique's original** inten**tion, but still not quite seen to become** a real coffee shop.

Philippine Mountain Coffee's blends were just too difficult for the Tambuhin habitués to resist, and **there was a blend for every coffee** lover: two types of mild brown, one medium and one strong.

We those who preferred special coffee, Tony offered the drip method **similar to what he saw in Japan.**

Tony wants to keep the boutique concept at the forefront of his business branding, and there are many reasons that he cites as reasons why he cannot compete with the many coffee shops that have mushroomed in Metro Manila and other cities in the country, so why he will not be able to bring his blends to supermarkets.

First, he says, the quality and supply of locally harvested coffee beans will not support quantum jumps in demand. Local coffee beans need to be cleaned and re-classified according to size before they are roasted. Supply is also very dependent on the weather, and a severe one that **swamps the upland plantations where** coffee is traditionally grown will inevitably affect production.

Secondly, it takes at least three **times longer to roast the beans ac**cording to Tony's technique. And Tony at this point is quite not willing to compromise the quality of his beans by retooling his roasting technology.

Lastly, Tony says, "I have the country's most expensive coffee sold by pack."

All the more taken to being together

CHO, B2

Battle of the Best of the Best

INQUIRER Golf and EAGLE RIDGE

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The National Tournament of Club Champions

19-24 January 2009

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SEE MASTER SCORE, C2

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- **Luring French divers** into RP waters /D4

Sunday LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

CONDURA
THE NEGOSYO REF
FREE NEGOSYO START-UP KIT*

*Available only for the first one hundred (100) registrants

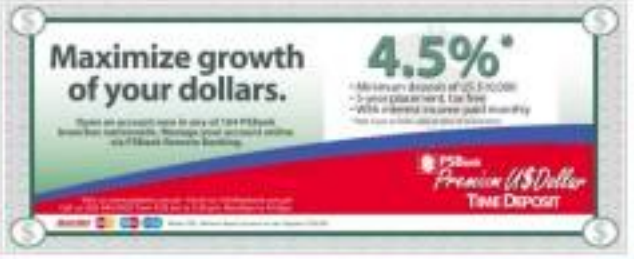
Leonardo DiCaprio is luxury watch's new ambassador

Why the brand's relationship with Brad Pitt ended

TAG HEUER NAMES ACTOR AND environment activist Leonardo DiCaprio as newest ambassador. The three-year agreement is unique for TAG Heuer and DiCaprio—the royalties from the deal and a reported$1m dollar commitment from DiCaprio will support major environment initiatives.

DiCaprio spoke regularly on ecology issues and is board member of the Natural Resources Defense Council. He co-wrote, co-produced and

DIGARGO C4



Open the New Year with a Thousand and One Lucky Finds

Make 2009 your luckiest year yet by taking charge of your own future. Visit SM City North Edsa and discover the luckiest activities to ensure your good fortune and good health.

FIND GOOD FORTUNE WITH FENG SHUI
Consult with the country's preeminent Feng Shui masters and find out how you can improve your luck for the new year.

Joy Lim
Jan. 18, 1pm • 2F, The Annex
Harness the power of charms and crystals for good health, happiness and prosperity.

Prof. Charlie Chao
Jan. 25, 1pm • City Center
Learn how to rearrange your furniture to bring luck, peace and harmony to your home.

Marites Allen
Jan. 26, 3pm
The Block
Find out how to make feng shui work for you through readings and consultations with Feng Shui expert Marites Allen.

Celebrate Chinese New Year at SM City North Edsa

LONGEST TIKOY EXHIBIT
Jan. 23-26 • Atrium, The Block
Be amazed by this record-breaking sticky rice cake display that's sure to bring good fortune and unity.

GIANT BUDDHA
Jan. 23-Feb. 1 • 4F, The Annex
Call forth happiness and prosperity as we unveil this giant Buddha.

FREE FORTUNE COOKIES
Jan. 24-25 • Atrium, The Block
Discover the sweetest fortunes in our lovely cheongsam-clad usherettes hand out free fortune cookies.

CHINESE CHECKERS CHALLENGE
Jan. 24-25
Lower Ground, The Annex
Start the year with a fun game of Chinese Checkers.

FENG SHUI FESTIVAL
Jan. 24-25 • City Center
Understand the flow of Qi and make it work for you during this informative Feng Shui festival.

FIREWORKS DISPLAY
Jan. 26, 7pm • Open Parking, The Block
Invite fortune in and drive bad energies away with a grand fireworks display.

at the new
SM city north edsa

Cristina Ponce Enrile, in love and at peace

By Thelma Sioson San Juan
Lifestyle Editor

TURNING 72 LAST Jan. 1, Cristina Ponce Enrile loves two men now more than ever in her life: God and her husband "Johnny," the senator and consummate politician.

In the house, she says her absolute trust and faith each waking day: "Tomorrow is not ours, it's God's," she says, refusing to let your friend Today worry.

Of the latter, she talks with a smile: "My husband is very caring now. He's a day passes by without him telling me he loves me."

Both separately—happiness even—hasn't always been done. Almost 10 years ago, one late morning, she sat facing an eight-in duo Isaac declaring her independence from her marriage, having her lawyered heavy he all front-page realtors in attendance.

Today at the threshold of a new year, all that seems ancient history, unclear except for Mrs. Enrile is not only living the moment; she is on in the moment.

And that moment feels like a dream. Seven in her childhood did she imagine herself to be an ambassador one day least of all to the Vatican. She is now, and tonight in her Makati home, not yet going over the incredible experience of her first few months last year in the Vatican as ambassador to the Holy See.

Seated so casually on the bar stool, wearing a classic silk blouse and trousers, a great cross jumps into prominence on her chest, Mrs. Enrile looks through the pages of an album bearing fresh pictures of her and her family in the Vatican.

She, her husband and the rest of her family can never forget that day Oct. 27, last year, when she presented her credentials to Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican.

The "gentleness of the Pope," as she calls her onetime, picked her up in the morning in the Vatican limousine. With motorcycle escorts, the limousine bearing her and the van loaded with her kin sent entourage wound their way to the Vatican. There to the ceremonial hall she was received by the Pope.

"He's a very genteel person. He exudes such kindness," she says of the head of the Catholic Church. She and the Pope talked for about half an hour. He said the Philippines and the Vatican are "very close." The was always emphasizing interfaith to see visionary" she recalls.

The Pope gave Mrs. Enrile and her husband medallions, and the rest of her entourage, rosaries. After her presentation to the Pope, she was led down the steps leading to the Blessed Sacrament in the Basilica, where the priests with incense anointed them, and then to the tomb of St. Peter and the Virgin Mary shrine. She also met with the Italian Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone.

Back when she turned 50, the odd herself she would retire, leave her position as chairman of her family's Jake Group, and go easy to her social, civic activities. In fact, she didn't.

Since the investor motion, rather, she's had a full calendar, almost seven days a week meeting with nuns, priests, and other Filipinos in the Vatican who come to her for help, and attending official functions. "It's hard work," she says, with a hint of irony. But then she enjoys meeting people from various countries and walks of life.

"I'm not a politician," she says, "and my work is not economic or political. It's more in the spiritual realm."

It was in December 2007 when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo called Sen. Enrile to ask if his wife would be interested in the ambassadorial plum in Vatican. The Enrile asked to be given two days to think about it.

"I decided to take it for two reasons—in seven kind and country," she now says wryly.

"Pr. Clement Reyes told me that the only way you can help the Pope is by helping the poor, and I've always kept that in mind."

The renowned Jesuit, James Reuter, has been a mentor to Cristina since 1955, when she was a student at St. Paul's College, and a counselor and friend to her children.

One in a brood of six, Cristina Customer was schooled in the convent and was raised in a strict, conservative home where she was no stranger to religious work. She's been in religious and charity work for more than 40 years now—her own many love priesthood, has helped build churches and even a basilica, has led the Senate and, for a time, Children sponsors in their many social, civic projects. She has been a politician's wife since 1965, the challenge which that has posed to her vow to abide by secrecy.

Did the opposition to her appointment as ambassador fine her? "I knew from the start that wasn't really meant for me," she says, referring to the messy political her husband is in. "People judge you without really knowing you."

Obviously, it didn't set her back; other life's obstacles didn't either. This fragile-looking woman is apparently made of sturdier stuff. James Cardinal Sin once told her point-blank, "You're a woman of very strong faith."

Indeed, ask her what has seen her through a very interesting life, she says instantly, "Faith."

Her 52 years of marriage, she

CONTINUED ON C4

AT PRESENTATION of credentials, Pope Benedict XVI with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Philippines to the Holy See, Cristina Ponce Enrile

AMBASSADOR Enrile introduces granddaughter Maria Karina to Pope Benedict XVI; as granddaughters Kristina Kamille and Kara Nicole look on.

CRISTINA Ponce Enrile at home

POPE Benedict XVI in warmer pose with the ambassador's family and close friends.

More than ever she loves two men in her life—"Not a day passes by without him telling me he loves me"

Street dance marks Sto. Niño de Pandacan fiesta; UST seminary holds reunion

PANDACAN RESIDENTS AND devotees from far and wide will grace the Church of Sto. Niño de Pandacan today in several Masses to honor the Sto. Niño. The feast falls on Jan. 14, but it is celebrated on the third Sunday of January, today.

Parish priest Levi Abaco will lead the celebration. Yesterday, the people held the traditional fluvial fiesta, a procession featuring a statue of the Sto. Niño. It was organized by Barangay Boling at Balsa ng Pilipinas.

Selina Bonifer-Iglesias, a devotee, joined the festival in years past when her daughter Sol Donovan ignominious had deliberately contracting a child. She whispered prayers to Sto. Niño de Pandacan before the image inside the church. Four years ago, her daughter bore a child. Sol is based in Singapore with her Chinese husband. Their son Gabriel Ili will turn 4 on Feb. 7.

History of Pandacan

Pandacan was established as a community in 1574 when Franciscan friars established the first mission in the district. Pandacan was originally part of the parish of Santa Ana, and became a separate

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Barracso Datuin

parish in 1713.

The first stone church in Pandacan was built in 1732 by Fr. Francisco del Rosario. It would not be completed until after 10 years. The image of the Holy Child of Jesus, or Sto. Niño, was enshrined in the church after the image was found in a well beside the church.

The well is still there. People light candles around it. Folk beliefs say the water from the well helped heal the infirm. Selina Abaco is preparing this early for the "bendecimasal of the church in 2012. With documents of miracles attributed to the Sto. Niño de Pandacan, it is hoped the church would be declared a national shrine. What I know of Sto. Niño de Pandacan is what the late Fel Capistrano used to tell me. He would go to Pandacan faithfully during the fiesta.

Looking back

My aunt Vicky Gonzalez Orendo of Pililla, Rizal Nora, would tell me stories of the old hamletown when my brothers and I would visit in we were growing up. Her mother, Dilan is Pateroda, whom we called Lola Ayong, died at 95. I was not at the wake, but my mother (and the Datung, sister of Lola Ayong, was. Of all the cousins, Amelie Vicky and my mother were closest.

Then she mentioned how the internal rotation of Intramuros High School in Pilipinas last year reached classmates abroad through this column.

New officers

Those officers will prepare for this Feb. reunion in 2009....Dr. Ramon Jr. Castillo (chair); Vice Mayor Honorio Bayog (assistant chair); Delilah L. Martin (secretary); Melen Salvator (treasurer); Sonny B. Madamba (auditor); Rufino Guillermo Orino Cervantes (sergeant at arms). Chairman is Boy Pandacanan, principal of Roosevelt High School.

The association awarded certificates of recognition to Marilde P. Chua and Eduardo S. Tobacian for exemplary services. Bishop Mayor Augustus Lukban conferred the officers for the event's success.

Special commendations was also given the board of directors: Alden L. Flores, Vicky Parenda Orendo, Carmelita F. Arsano, Edmundo Jesenillo, Lito Baquiran and Marietta Agustin.

Camarin de la Virgen

The National Shrines has declared the Camarin de la Virgen to Santa Ana Church a national treasure. The presentation of the certificate to Fr. Ely Mandanga, OFM, will be on Jan. 22, after the 4 p.m. Mass.

In Intramuros's "Santa Ana Walk Book" will also be launched. Those who wish to order can text Ely Fidili at 0916-4283709.

THE MIRACULOUS Sto. Niño de Pandacan

Sto. Niño de Providencia

Devotees of the Sto. Niño de Providencia will gather in the chapel in Pilipinas Street, BF Homes Village, Jan. 24, from 7 a.m. onward to celebrate the 17th year of the miracle when the image stained in spilt oil came to body. A 2:30 p.m. procession will bring the image to Mary Mother of the Church Parish for the 3 p.m. Mass. Msgr. Philip Cruz will officiate the consecrated Mass.

Holy Cross pilgrimage

Three years ago, travel agent Sally Matchers witnessed the influx of pilgrims going up the mountain of San Juan, Taytay, to venerate the relic of the Holy Cross that is enshrined in a chapel of Monumento de Taytay. Miracle healings have been experienced by pilgrims.

Sally is organizing a pilgrimage on Jan 30. The arrangements heading the relic is opened only twice a year: Jan. 30, when the chapel and relic were blessed by then Papal Nuncio Fernando Filoni; and Sept. 14, feast of the Holy Cross. Fr. Archie Carter is the prior of the Servants of the Risen Christ maintaining the monastery and chapel.

Pick-up points are Alabang, SM Megamall and Trabona Rotation from the Holy Land will be given to the first 30 callers after will treat her at (096)-2951166, (0906-5015167.

UST Seminary reunion

The University of Santo Tomas Alumni Priests Association (USTAPA) will have its 74th Alumni Homecoming Jan. 20-21 at the UST Central Seminary. This year's theme is "Dominican Clergy Exploring the Light of God's Kindness."

This year's homecoming is very special since the centenary is at the threshold of UST's 400th-year celebration in 2011. This year, it is also celebrating its 60th year in the Archdiocese Seminary of the Philippines.

To make the homecoming celebration memorable, UST Alpa will honor all the former priests of the seminary: Dominican professors and lecturers; Golden Jubilarians of Batch 1950; Silver Jubilarians of Batch 1960; and the new Thomasian bishops, Msgr. Dennis A. Almirana, auxiliary bishop of Davao, and Msgr. Bernardino C. Sono, apostolic nuncio to Haiti.

One in 5 teens have sent nude images of themselves

MY STUDENTS THINK I'M A PRETTY hip mom. Why? Because I have Facebook and Multiply. I mode, have with students long after they have left school through those social networking sites. I also blog. MUSE: Memories—www.sassyjobreunion.blogspot.com chronicles my journey as a 40something woman and parent.

Technology is a powerful tool with pluses and minuses.

There's a current US survey of 1,280 teens and young adults on the intersection of sex and cyberspace with respect to attitudes and behavior. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com commissioned this survey to explore their electronic activity—the first public study to quantify the proportion of teens and young adults who are sending or posting sexually suggestive text and images.

The survey found that nearly half of teens have received a sexually suggestive message via e-mail, text or IM, and nearly 20 percent of teens have sent such a message. Most young adults have seen one (39 percent) or received one (64 percent), but not sent this—one in five teens and one-third of young adults said they had sent a nude or semi-nude image of themselves or others.

You might say, "But that is in the US!" Not exactly. If you stopped and paid attention to your teenage friends about the explicit nature of these texts and young adults engage in sexualize, you would realize that.

I'm not being a prude or a prig as my daughter likes to say. There are benefits to being careful about what you post online because they have lasting consequences, particularly when one applies for college or a job. The survey says that many respondents agreed that engaging in this sort of behavior "can have serious negative consequences," but do it anyway.

What is referred to as the "Online Disinhibition Effect" is often what propels these tweens and young adults to do it. John Suler writes on the psychology of cyberspace: "The physical body and its face must grasp the short-term and long-term consequences of their actions. Would they create a future employer viewing their half-naked 17-year-old body a decade from now, or seeing images of them totally wasted in some head room or booth?

- Know who your kids are communicating with.

Learn who your kids spend time with online and in the phone. Supervising and monitoring your child's whereabouts in real life and in cyberspace doesn't make you melodic; it's parenting. Teach them not to randomly "add" or "approve" people who state to be their friends. The dangers of hacking and identity theft are very real.

- Be aware of what your teens are posting.

Check out your teen's Multiply, Friendster or Facebook and other public online profiles from time to time. This isn't snooping; this is information your kids are making public. Talk with them about their own notion of what is public and what is private. Your views may differ; you won't know until you ask, listen and discuss.

There is so much you can learn about what's going on in your child's mind by viewing his or her online activity. Use it as a teaching moment. Sometimes these are indicators of depression or risky behavior that you would not otherwise notice.

For example, the survey says 56 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys said they send sexually suggestive content to be "fun or flirtatious." The percentages get higher as they reach young adulthood, but the reasons are the same.

If you find that your son or daughter is behaving improperly in cyberspace, you are still his the danger. If you are a cyberconscious with your own webpages, check yourself as well. Do you post suggestive messages, comments or pictures? Or visit sites you has your child from visiting? Aren't your beliefs and values online time, is it may be a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

E-mail the author at carlyhobson@ymail.com.

ROOTS AND WINGS

Carly Hobson-Gobaldo

Survey on teens, sex and the worldwide Web

JACKIE Reyes

A musical actress is born

By Bea Villareal
Contributor

A BUDDING STAGE actress dared to play the lead part of Georgette Chen in the recent Singapore-Philippines production "Georgette the Musical?"

Held at the newly-established Museum of Contemporary Art and Design or MCA, "Georgette the Musical" featured newbie Jackie Reyes.

Georgette Chen is one of Singapore's most celebrated painters. In her time, beginning in the 1930s, art was not exciting in the West.

In conservative Singapore, however, Modernism was frowned upon, more as the idea of a headstrong girl heading off to Paris, alone, to study art.

"Georgette the Musical" was a collaboration of theater artists from Singapore and the Philippines, held for the benefit of upcoming generations of artists and audiences alike. Hopefully, the same passion for art, creativity and independent thinking that Georgette fought for is her time.

Jackie Reyes, a native of Palawan, made a great role emerge, introducing us to a world where a simple act of expression (in this case, painting) would be an awesome act of rebellion. Reyes had fire in her eyes as she portrayed the part. She was a revelation.

She has fallen in love with her married boss

DEAR EMILY,

I'm an expat in Southeast Asia, 46, and a widow for two years now. I have two sons in college and am considered a self highly resourceful. I am a devout Catholic and I live my faith. My problem is I am falling for my boss who is 10 years older and married.

My boss showed his concern for my family early on when my husband was still alive. He even helped a lot financially when my husband died. A year after my husband's death, I began to seriously doubt if our relationship was strictly professional, when he told me he found me attractive. As I tried to keep my distance, he got mad and nitpicked on me.

However, the nitpicking was shortlived; he became nice, extra caring and openly expressed again, and I fell in love.

The problem is I am already falling for him though I know I should not have anything to do with a married man and cannot bear to hurt his wife.

I cannot leave my work as it pays well and provides for my family's needs. I also believe it is God-given. What should I do?

—WIDOW IN DISTRESS

Being near every day to this man whom you have fallen in love with will not certainly solve your problem. You should move to another department or look for another job in a different company. If you honestly believe you'll have difficulty dealing with him and your emotions.

You can talk to him squarely and tell him to leave you alone, but this heart-to-heart talk might open doors down and lead to more intimacies. Or it might lead to confrontation—and you already have a history of nitpicking by him. Don't let him square widowhood with weakness. It's all up to you. Scream to God for guidance, but help yourself to look for another job—just to get away from that close and present danger.

If there is a will, there's a way. If you're the person of strong faith you say you are, why doubt the power of God who will be there every inch of the way to guide you in darkness? Make that leap of faith and believe that something better awaits you— remember.

(E-mail the author at emaxie@inquirer.com.ph. Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to Inquirer. Log on to www.phs.gov.ph and listen to Mr Marcelo 9-hour 'Sa pag'-um 'Talkboson Tigbaan,' 7-11 A.M. to 12 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dzBB 594, 198.)

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Marcelo

Look for another job to get away from that danger

MEN OF ST. JOSEPH GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 3rd Men of St. Joseph (MSJ)/Santuario de San Jose Parish Fund Raising Golf Tournament is scheduled to be held at Valley Golf & Country Club on March 13, 2009, Friday. Tee-off time is at 8am. Funds that will be raised from this tournament will be used to assist in financing the schooling of street children housed in Silong Tanglaw and the expenditures for the daily upkeep of this center. MSJ's various outreach programs for the poorest of the poor in West Cramo; and other outreach programs of the Parish. For inquiries please call Raymund Atendido - Project Director at Tel No. 4013387 or 8877311.

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LEONARDO DiCaprio sharing drinks with TAG Heuer CEO Jean-Christophe Babin

DiCaprio new ambassador

From page 01

nurtured "The 11th Hour," a well-received 2007 documentary on the world's ecosystem. DiCaprio's commitment to sustainability and children is in mind will be the cornerstones of his partnership with TAG Heuer.

"TAG Heuer and I will make decisions in some of the most influential and effective environment organizations around," says DiCaprio.

"DiCaprio is the actor than an actor. He wants to change the planet and improve the plight of children in need. He is contributing his skills and wealth to a better, smarter world," says Jean-Christophe Babin, CEO and president.

Brad Pitt is TAG Heuer's former ambassador for four years.

He was an exceptional ambassador and remains a highly esteemed friend of the brand.

"However, this year TAG Heuer is revamping its successful 'What are you made of' campaign, which has been running since 2002. We felt that now here is the advertising campaign revamp would create even greater impact, hence Lin," Babin says.

With the state of the economy it is crucial for a luxury brand like TAG Heuer to be able to leverage its ambassadors in the US, a primary market for any luxury brand. Pitt's contract did not cover North America, so TAG Heuer needed a new global ambassador to represent the brand worldwide.

"DiCaprio's agreement to include North America in his contract was key to our decision and quite unusual for an actor of his caliber and resume," Babin says.

The synergy fits with TAG Heuer's product collections, which will focus on the key timepieces, Grand Carrera, TAG Heuer Monaco, TAG Heuer Carrera, Link and aquaracer, with the launch of an iconic timepiece in April.

TAG Heuer has been around since 1860, and has a endless reputation for producing amazing innovative timepieces. in terms of communication, TAG Heuer has become the No. 1 aspirational brand, especially in the US.

TAG Heuer's new Carrera Calibre 16 Day-Date chronograph gives a new interpretation to the classical codes of the distinguished Carrera line. Furnished with a tachymeter scale on its fixed bezel for calculating speed, it pays homage to the great motor racing legends and "gentlemen drivers."

DICAPRIO with Ulrich Wiehe, GM of LVMH Watch & Jewelry USA

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AMBASSADOR Ponce Enrile introduces daughter Katrina to the Pope as Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile looks on.

Cristina Ponce Enrile in love and at peace

From page C1

says, was about "sharing the ups and downs of life." Talk of her marriage brings a smile to her face.

"Now in our old age," she says of her marriage to one of the most powerful and colorful men in recent history, "we're down." She adds that he's more caring now.

The Enriles have a daughter, Katrina, who's taken over the reins of the family business, and a son, Josh, a politician. They have eight grandchildren.

She says she's learned "to live one day at a time" because, she reports, "tomorrow belongs to God."

The inner peace is palpable. "I thank God on bended knees each morning for giving me this day," she says. "I'm more at peace now, perhaps the sacred grounds [of the Holy See] have breathed me in many ways."

She has just spent the afternoon of that day at V Luna Hospital where, with other sponsors of seminars, she is helping build a stand. We tell her she does no signs of slowing down.

"Like God's soldier, I will plod on," she says, "until this body falls apart."

Incidentally, that body and face—still so smooth and refreshingly lined with wrinkles—have not felt the need for a facelift or cosmetic surgery, as is the vogue among Mrs. Enrile's contemporaries.

"No surgery," she booms, proud.

Now that's commitment.

THE AMBASSADOR Escorted by the Pontiff's Swiss guards en route to her immediate

C-Lium

According to doctors, higher fiber intake is a secret to staying healthy and youthful. That's why you need C-Lium.

It has up to 14x more fiber than oatmeal and cereal. It is made from 100% natural psyllium husk which is probably the best source of dietary fiber in the world. It helps eliminate excess cholesterol and fat and helps lower blood sugar levels.

C-Lium every day helps keep the years away.

Pascual

Sunday LIFESTYLE

UN JOUR, UN SAC printed cotton canvas tote with black leather handles

UN JOUR, UN SAC boutique

Paper handbags, exotic fabrics

UN JOUR, UN SAC

IN 1998, THE LUXURY LEATHER GOODS and accessory designer François Pinlac launched a completely new and original concept, uniting a paper handbag with leather handles. Customers were quickly captivated by this playful idea.

The Un Jour, Un Sac brand was born, and its first retail spot opened in 2000.

A wide range of combinations are possible, thanks to the variety of available shapes and materials. Handles are offered in crocodile, calfskin, cow leather, sharkskin, goatskin and even PVC. The handbags are made of paper, but are also available in leather or in leather. Instead of these handbag models are unisex also.

For Pinlac, it is essential to vary his creations without being too influenced by fashion trends, which change from one season to another, in order to offer handbags that his customers can personalize and make their own. He and his team are nevertheless of ideas, regularly creating new models between collections.

He joins the star's sentiments appreciate the personalized nature of these handbags, which are handcrafted in France, notably in a studio in the Somme that previously supplied the renowned Hermès leather house.

Handles are sold separately. You can mix and match the bags and handles.

MARTINE SITBON

CHOCOLATE large tote in calfskin

BORN IN CASABLANCA TO MIXED FRENCH and Italian parentage, designer Martine Sitbon grew fashion as an eclectic, edgy flair.

A graduate of the famed Studio Berçot, the designer says fashion not only as design, but as something of a 3-D art to be worn and used. Well known for her use of nude insides and unusual fabric treatment, Sitbon launched her collection in 1985.

Three years later, she began designing for Chloé. After that stint, she went back to designing her own collection, which continue to impress fashion cognoscenti today.

QUILTED bordeaux ivory handbag

LAMBSKIN sandal with quarter trim color-burst

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Starting afresh with fun, positivity— and the right shoes

JANUARY IS TIME FOR A FRESH start, especially this one since we have two New Years in it. Barely have we survived the extended holiday season, and already 2009 is in full swing.

The social calendar led off with a

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THE MUSICALLY gifted children of the Milk Circle of Cainta City

PROUD grandparents Jess and Cynthia Valdez with grandkids Nikki, Andy, Marvin, Tyrone, Jerome, Aida, Harry, Bryan, Kimiko and Yvonne

GOLDEN wedding anniversary couple Jess and Cynthia Valdez

Starting afresh with fun, positivity—and the right shoes

from page D1

new planning events. Lifestyle Asia magazine editor Anna Soberano let me to get my hands dirty and help plant over 350 trees around the Wildlife City of Indonesia. Together with other nature lovers from the Rotary Club of Makati West, Instrumentos Astronómicos and the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, we all planted a tree for every page of the magazine.

What a way to infuse our carbon footprints. I even a silk hat-covered goats by fun designer Rajo Laurel, as living just isn't enough to have a Boy Scout dig my hole for me. Be prepared, boys!

Lifestyle Asia also got their Most Eligible Ladies unveiled. It was wonderful to see the youngest generation is involved at an early age.

The Chinese New Year is just around the corner. Some may feel like talking with the current financial crisis, but I prefer to foresee the New Year with positive energy and unabashedly optimistic. My feng shui forecast is not too favorable, as the coming Ox is not auspicious to those born the Year of the Rabbit.

Thus, I need to double up on being industrious and charitable. My free-spirited nature makes it difficult to be industrious, so I will engage myself in more charity programs.

I need to double up on being industrious and charitable; my feng shui forecast this year is not too favorable

Right shoes

For first, I need the right shoes. Thank goodness Charles & Keith was launched at The Gallery at Greenhill 3. This world-renowned ladies' footwear and accessories brand premiered in Algeciras Gated Community. The local collection, bold printed pumps, polished wedge sandals, boho and oxfords.

SPECTACULAR dancers of Club Mudi

Lanaklan but was reasonably priced here also, so does Charles & Keith, so it is just right that the new shop is right in the midst of the CBD watch out for—and the model hoards are in the first floor but the fourth shopon the second.

After the launch, Aurora Cruz, chairman and Beauty King Ben Chua hosted the Charles & Keith International Group delegates from Singapore to a sumptuous dinner at his ultra-chic home, designed by Eduard Bulaon.

My closest swimmers was Pedro International Group director Alex Lone, who explained that Pedro is a men's shoe line, which would expand into a ladies' line soon. Aurora Cruz, also owns the franchise of Pedro Shoe Store in SM Mall of Asia.

Another comfortable priced shoe brand is Aerosoft from Singapore. The styles are quite unique and very comfortable. Check out its latest collection at Rustan's Shangri-La and also in Shang Mall.

Wall, ceiling designs

This early, there have been several launches throughout the metropolis. Kuchnia Asia (call 8817-0876) or visit www.kuchnia-asia.com) recently introduced specially prepared wall and ceiling designs in its Scarlatti showroom at Alabang Town Center.

The designs are rendered by a special machine that can print directly on any flat surface, be it wood, concrete, glass, plastic or metal. It can be printed in reproduction, in graphic of you and the image is scanned as Malabar and Magnado managing from a split bamboo into your living room wall, you can have it mapped at Kuchnia. Of course, as an interior designer, I'd advise that we talk before you go ahead and do that.

At the launch, Kuchnia Asia owner and landscaper Nina Mahrar invited the Milk Circle to the golden wedding anniversary of my parents-in-law, Jess and Cyn thia Valdez, last December. The lovely celebration catered with a blues celebrated by DJ Sir Sandro, and then featured a tango dance by the three brothers, Robin, Dennis and Dario.

Robin's wife, Shona, was also recently pregnant, but she was driven as she danced prior performed a smashing Argentinean number choreographed by Chris Miguel. Congratulations are due Robin and Mona, who delivered Gemma Nadia on Jan. 4.

From a golden anniversary to a marquise diamond wedding—love is in the air, indeed. Last week, I hosted the unique and fun wedding of Stephen Sean to Chloe Rose-an Chan. What made it special was the unconditional theme and entertainment, the latter provided by Club Mudi. It was a fantastic show with lindal joyous moments from the couples' parents.

Musical sensation

Right before the celebration of the Chinese New Year is "Lizzie," the off-Broadway sensation, coming to the CCP Jan. 22-25, and what big an historical topic actor and lady dancer Kim Henaresed.

Kim swings from ballet to hip-hop through his vast autobiographical musical journey directed by Nathaniel Uno. The CCP in cooperation with the Ateneo Cultural Council Philippines, is the premiere of the limited run of this much-talked-about show. For tickets, call Ticketworld at 891 9999.

Proceeds from the show will be donated to the prestigious Wedding Academic and Research Institute for the Arts (Mata). The school requirements the CCP commitment to provide top students from the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) with financial assistance so they can receive a college education while they continue to develop their craft.

It's a lot of fun to start the year feels and pretty. I look forward with positive thoughts and feelings to the trendiness that the Boy Me News Times are bringing. I hope that you, all my readers and editors, are doing the same.

E-mail the author at susanbacon@inquirer.com.ph

FOREST Fairy Sea Princess with the Sea Scouts of the Philippines at Intramuros

LIFESTYLE Asia magazine were planning session. Julie Hilmendahlan, Lorraine Belmonte, editor Anna Soberano and Digitex Group Tin, Gab Perez, Aldo Chaparro and twins Camille and Nicole Tamaca with Lifestyle Asia's Noreen Cayanan and Cheryl Tio

GORGEOUS couple Stephen and Kim Gan at San Antonio Church

NEWLYWEDS Kimberly Tan Bonoan-Chua, Gan and Stephen Joshua Y. Gan Jr. with parents Socorro and Leticia Ponce-Chua and Helen and Stephen Gan

ACTOR Dantes Quimpo and Nina Ozlewel

A-LIST couple Lucy Torres-Gomez and Richard Gomez

FRIENDS Fraser and Mark Manalo

TAGUIG Councilor Ben Tinga, Charles & Keith Group brand manager Kristine Lim, Tobyn Lim, Kat Lim and Rina Wing

RIBBON CUTTING and opening of the new Karina Bautista ground by Eva Patrona and Rep. Rolly Bocatt of Mon Intops, with crown designer Nina Mahrar

SUPERV Corp. chairman and creative director Ben Chua, Charles & Keith International Group marketing and communications manager Lisi Ku-ling, Sea Princess, Pedro International Group director Alex Low and Charles & Keith International Group director Feng Shun Bang

PEDRO Makeup, Marjo Medicinal and former Supreme Court justice Jesus Bellosillo

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

AS HEARD ON THE FARM

ACROSS

1 1986 Robert Redford/Meryl Streep movie
6 Continent component
10 Dash, e.g.
12 Offending one
13 Mid-May sight
14 When — rather, literally
15 Ancient Peruvian
18 Mexican chocolate
19 Lend, lent
20 Lackluster
21 Theater, e.g.
22 Mischievous
24 Why is (you) (are) (wrong), e.g.
26 Lawsuit
28 Lemonade, e.g.
29 Sofia with Gloria Loren
31 Capone of fantasy
32 Pasta, e.g.
33 Sofia with Gloria Loren
34 Celebrate ostentatiously
35 Dish served in a bowl
36 Joan
37 Pudding ingredient, e.g.
38 Sandwich, e.g.
39 Sandwich, e.g.
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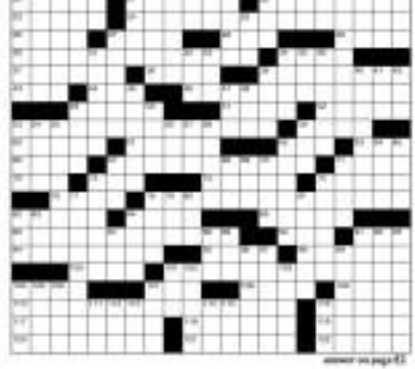

answer on page E3

1 Large Pizza Bianca Thin Crust Pizza
1 Chick 'N Chips Solo Pack
1 Pitcher of Coke*
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It is also fast becoming a fun destination with the addition of its Fun Zones in key branches, where the latest exciting games can be played leaving keyed-up youngsters delighted to spend their quality time playing with their siblings and friends at the same time giving themselves a chance to bring home a wide-array of toys as prizes.

With its "If it's late, it's free" commitment, this only guarantees that the brand is serious with its promise. Delivery service is a convenient way for busy, on-the-go people who are craving for their favorite Shakey's products. Just one number to dial **77-777**, one can enjoy the Shakey's total dining experience even in the comfort of their homes.

*Make each moment worth celebrating with Shakey's. For Fun, Family, Pizza visit the nearest Shakey's restaurant or dial **77-777** for on-time delivery.*

DELIVERY HOTLINE **77-777** **If it's late, It's FREE!**

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

DOT DIRECTOR/tourism attaché Venus Tan,Aleksandra Tolentino and wife, RP ambassador to France Boni Navarro-Tolentino, Salon de la Plongée General Commissioner Hélène-Ni Teyssi, DOT Sales & PR manager Arnold Gonzales, Cathay Pacific country manager Mark Smith

(ABOVE and right) The Philippine booth at the Paris exhibit, with the Bayanihan musical troupe performing in one corner

More and more we're luring French divers into RP waters

Text and photos by Gibbs Cadiz

A DOT gets a souvenir shot of his diving lesson at the indoor pool; new French kids play with native fish at the Philippine booth.

DOT aims its marketing firepower at a growing, and high-spending, sector

THE PHILIPPINES featured as top diving destination by leading French tour operator Nouvelles Frontières

AMID DIMINISHED ECONOMIES all over the world, with travel and leisure among the biggest casualties to be hit by the downturn, some Philippine tourism experts—practitioners as well as policy hands—are pinning their hopes on a sector that might appear to be recession-proof: divers.

"It's an upscale market, certainly not for the backpacker type," said Venus Tan, director for marketing and media affairs of Department Host, a company that operates a role of resorts and diving boats almost mostly in foreign, usually European, divers.

Expedition's typical "Liveaboard" package of seven nights on a specially outfitted diving boat and three nights on shore in a five-class resort cost around 1,900 Euros. A million-peso price, but "it's a top-tier package that foreign pax on some of the best diving sites in the Philippines, and even 200 Euros can go a long way here," explained Lee. "That amount is inclusive of meals and accommodation; already, so it's a pretty good package."

Proof that the market for diving in Philippine waters remains on the upswing is that, even if the economy season hasn't started yet, Lee said her company's trips to the Tubbataha Reef are almost fully booked for the year.

"The Philippines as a diving destination is relatively low-cost, so it will remain attractive," echoed Tommy Sodergren, a Swedish national who owns a diving resort, El Galleon, with his own diving school, in Puerto Galera, Mindoro.

Sodergren, who has lived in the country for 21 years and is married to a Filipina, said the Philippines offers great bang for the buck value for divers—a considerable factor even for high-spending but pragmatic travelers.

"In Puerto Galera alone, there are 25 to 30 diving sites within 15 minutes of each other, so it's very convenient," he pointed out.

Exhibit

Lee and Sodergren were among the Philippine-based tour operators who joined the Department of Tourism's (DOT) participation in France's premiere diving exhibit Salon de la Plongée, held a week ago at the Parc des Expositions Porte de Versailles in Paris.

The other private sector participants included divers Sirabu Divers, Atlantis Dive Resorts, Atmosphere Resorts, Blue Water Dive Resort, Sea Explorers Philippines, Sampaguita Resort and Cathay Pacific.

That week in Paris with DOT is one to capture a significant chunk of France's diving market. The French are among the world's most enthusiastic divers. Around 600,000 are registered practitioners, members of some 2,500 active clubs around the country.

Salon de la Plongée is, in effect, their exhibit—an international fair that brings together French and foreign exhibitors specializing in diving. Last year, it hosted more than 400 exhibitors and around 40,000 general public visitors, majority of whom held Grade 2 (Advanced level) diving skills or On-French grading system.

The fair offered not only an array of global diving destinations, but also companies and brands banking on manner of diving gear and accessories, even lessons in a large indoor pool.

The Philippines was "Destination of the Year" in the 2008 exhibition, a distinction that, with the country's previous experience on the TV show "Fear Factor" (the French version of "Survivor"), resulted in greater awareness of the Philippines as an alternative leisure destination for the French.

According to DOT records, French tourists accounted for the highest percentage growth (16.4 percent) among European visitors in the Philippines in 2007. From January to October 2008, despite the creeping economic squeeze, French arrivals still managed a respectable 28.94-percent increase. This makes France one of the country's fastest-growing tourist markets in Europe today.

Not only are the French, and European tourists in general, high spenders, they also stay in the country longer—around 18 days, spending around 100 US dollars a day. It's not hard to see why, said Mark Smith, France country manager for Cathay Pacific, which has the biggest share—about 45 percent—of the French tourist market to the Philippines.

"You've got a fantastic array of diving sites, dive sites are relatively unspoiled, Filipinos are a very welcoming people, and Europeans tourists get a lot of value for their money, with hotel prices, food and drinks very affordable," he pointed out. Smith himself dived in Philippine waters during his stint as Cathay's country manager in Manila a few years ago.

"If the Euro remains strong, the Philippines will remain a very affordable and attractive destination," said Smith. "People love diving are very passionate about it, the industry will hold up, I believe."

"We'll just have to offer them the right package," said Venus Tan, Philippine tourism attaché for the Benelux, Central and Eastern European markets.

"Travel is curtailed in the Europeans, and with 'fish-lovin' and other French diving operators featuring the Philippines as their main diving destination, we've created a buzz in this niche product to recommend. We have one of the strongest suits—we have the highest marine bio-diversity in the world"—and we have to stay in this market and build on it."

Different breed

French tourists, said Tan, are a different breed. Generally they want more surroundings and greater interaction with local people and culture. "They don't like staying in concrete structures. They don't just stay in the resort to dive, they want to immerse themselves in local food, to talk with people. That's an advantage for us, because we're very accessible. The impression always is that Philippines is very friendly and hospitable."

Tan is looking at another sub-set of the market—airline employees with travel privileges, a big sector in Europe—to boost the number, through access advertising and editorial pressure to consumer magazines, newsletters and other publications.

The monitored PR campaign the last two years has resulted in many French travel firms taking a second look at the Philippines.

Around 14 major French diving operators have or are featuring the country to their 2008-2009 campaigns, while Nouvelles Frontieres, one of France's biggest tour operators, pushed the Philippines as a top destination in its spreading establishment in the Seychelles.

Air France, too, devoted 17 pages of its inflight magazine to Philippine destinations, while the popular French Travel Guide had nine pages of pictures of Bohol, Palawan and other must-visit destinations.

"Our goal is to make the Philippines a destination that can compete with the Caribbean and the Red Sea among French divers," said Tan. "Divers will travel to dive, and we're here."

What about French tourists who aren't too keen on diving? The country, it seems, has got them covered, too.

In March this year, another tourism-related fair called Destinations Senses will open in the same venue. The latest, this time to ecotourists, and its featured destination: The Philippines. Hi-yo Silver, opressos.

More pictures at www.gibbscadiz.com; e-mail gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

A night of haute cuisine

CEBU CEBU
Jaime Escarrical

HAUTE CUISINE INSPIRED 40 haute couture uses the dramas of the recent festival dinner of La Chaine des Rotisseurs's Cebu chapter. It was held at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel, presided by Michel Ghuillier, who heads La Chaine in the Philippines, and his wife, Ambassador Thomas Ghuillier who is at the helm of the Cebu bailiwick.

Jacqueline was the host organizer of the theme, having approved the evening dress code of white and black. Women were all by Cebu's fashion ace, Philip Rodriguez. Jewelers on the M.L. Rotchinch land created for her a magnificent necklace of green tourmalines that glittered like emeralds.

More than 180 signed up for the dinner and turned up in the top togs, the ladies in gala-national gowns. Black was discouraged for such occasions, and the men either in tux or barong.

The ballroom had an area enlisted in white silk to indicate a wintry scene. Guests sat in gilt chairs with tables dressed with satin. On a stage lit by crystal chandeliers were mannequins in gowns inspired by fashion icons and interpreted by Cebu's style gurus. They also designed how the rooms were planned.

Bruno de Jaeve-Ed Hofer for Balenciaga, Jean Jannin for Yves Saint Laurent (YSL), Arie Gaynon for Chanel, Philip B for Valentino, Allure Aretha for Dior and Gary Santiago for Lacroix. You may wonder how they did it, and there was a pamphlet for guidance.

Balenciaga's blacks and browns were featured on the first course of caviar and foie gras on canapes, stacked beneath YSL's frothiness now in the scallop and lobster chandelier, with a touch of cognac. The quilted Chanel 2.55 handbag was reproduced in puff pastry studded with dark nuggets.

Valentino red was all over the room. Beetroot sorbet, and Dior's mashed-lime evoked his golden era of the 1940s in the main course. The Angus beef was cut that way and wrapped in Jannin hats. Lacroix's "Couleurs d'Isles" came in four dessert tidbits of as many colors.

Picture of bliss

Hotel GM Marco Peracolo was the picture of bliss, as all eight people were ladies for a successful affair. He ate with Michel and Amparito at Table No. 1 along with Josephine and Federico Romano who heads La Chaine in Manila.

GOWNS and jewels for a Chaine night—Rosalee Sato, Amparito Ghuillier, Cecilia Rodriguez

TASTEFUL FOOD: Hotel GM Marco Peracolo and Teresita Mendoza

Here for the occasion was Philippine Ambassador to Italy Philippe Ghuillier with his family with Echo Diego Ghuillier. They were with their children Michael and Angie Jose Ghuillier Miranda, Michelle and Jacqui Ghuillier, and Maurice Elloque from the Hong Kong office of the Union Bank of Switzerland.

Rafaelita Pelaez came from Cagayan de Oro to join. Her table was seated around what with Dr. Nestor Alonzo, Jo Tinsky and Generoso Elizalaina, Alice Plaza, Vilma Bermudez and Judge Ramon Bernardo.

Margie Ghuillier wore a Cary Sandia gown. She had worn it in Dubai and created a sensation. Chef Herman Diewald was at her table with Marilet Elepaq, Lorelei Abad, Conor Cabreros escorted by Hudson Bjornson, and Isabel Pe Thermid and Sylvester Kooiman, here on holiday from Norway.

Shirley Gonzales, whose family owns Plantation Bay resort in Mactan (Mactan), was congratulated for its election of ex-officio by Cordy Nam-saved magazine. That was one of the topics at one table, where reporter was tasty and informative with Johnny and Anna Marie Dizon, architect Tessie Javier, Vicky Dakay, Baby Cabero, and Gabriel Palileo whose White Shop tapas bar is packed nightly.

Lydia Anne Alfonso came with her daughter Mia Alfonso Garcia. Fe Erasmo Javier, 82, charmed his table-mates, among them Angie Mathieu, Marissa Pernas, Jaime Chua, Pingky and Picky Chang.

Dr. Norma Chia Fonacier sat with top hoteliers such as the Marco Polo's Hans Hesse and Shangri-La Mactan's Raymund and Sandra Burgo. General manager-senior the Mactan's Rex Abraham and Pharmacist Bay's Riven Belarmino. They were seated with top Cebu La Chaine officer Ernesto Mendezona, Rosebud Sala, Arcadia La Yu, Shirley Lozo, and Tony Lozada.

The evening did not end with cigars and cognac. Aficionados the style of "La de de Paris" did from the sitting and clambered back in folds of silken cloth. And then there was dancing.

Next event for La Chaine is another evening of formal dining when new members are inducted come March.

Float above Cebu City—face down

$5-million Sky Experience Adventure poised to be the thrilla of the south

LIVING ON THE EDGE: The Edge Coaster at the top of the Crown Regency Hotel and Towers is not for the faint-hearted.

Bill Kilgore

Sammy Ty

PALE as snipe through Sky Walk Extreme. Don't worry, though, as each harness can support a weight of up to 5,000 pounds.

THE SKY Observatory, with coin-operated binoculars and telescopes

Text and photos by Rose R. Jacinto

RISING A CHANTER ALONG THE edge of a building 450 feet off the ground may not seem much to a hardcore thrill-seeker, but leave you tried it two dozen with the safety locks supporting just the latest body? Maybe not, unless you've been to Cebu City recently.

The Crown Regency Hotel and Towers on Fuente Osmeña Boulevard, in the heart of Cebu City, launched what could become the south's entertainment icon—the Sky Experience Adventure (SEA).

Atop the tallest hotel in the city, the $5-million SEA has the Edge Coaster, a unique amusement ride that rotates along the curbing of the building's first floors, inclined at 30 degrees at the start of the ride, the 140-foot contrary one-lift up to a dizzying 90 degrees. How much further it tilts, or not tilt at all, you can control at the push of a button.

The Edge Coaster is not about speed, but about the thrill of enjoying a bird's-eye view of the cityscape. Each ride makes a full turn around the tower in four minutes.

"We want to be the new landmark in Cebu. If you haven't been in Cebu," said Richard King, owner-boatsmith in the SEA. He's chair and CEO of property developer J. Ring and Sons Co., Inc., DIGEC. JGEC is developer of Crown's Regency Hotel and Towers.

SEA also has the Sky Walk Extreme where visitors walk on a four-foot-wide strip around the tower, supported by safety harness. The finale is a glass walkway about 10-15 ft long. You can jump, dance, or pretend to be falling on the edge; or have yourself photographed by the SEA official because like you are standing on air.

STRAP a pose, pretend you're falling, jump in place at the Sky Walk Extreme Adventure.

Safety, said King, is SEA's priority. SEA is so sure of its visitors' safety that no one is required to sign a waiver before the ride.

Designed and engineered by instructive Skiles Inc., which created the amusement rides on top of the Stratosphere Las Vegas Hotel and Casino and the adventure experiences at Illusion Towers, SEA complies with the strictest international safety standards, officials said.

Assistant for the Sky Walk Adventure alone, said Danny Ty, managing director of International Link Manufacturer and Contractors, cost more than $100,000 each, while each rope can carry the weight of several people put together at the same time.

State-of-the-art technology is suited to all rides that at any given time of day, engineers at Interactive Rides Inc. in the US can monitor what's happening in the country through the Internet—in real time.

SEA also has a Sky Observatory equipped with coin-operated binoculars and telescopes. Since SEA is open until midnight, the binoculars are also a good way to peek into the stars.

Sky Lounge serves fast food fare and Filipino foods. Sky Bistro has fine cuisines for the casual diner, while Serena Restaurant has international dish selections.

Next year, King said SEA will open the Infantry Orbit, the exact replica of that at the top of the Stratosphere Las Vegas. Infantry Orbit is a modern mechanical arm that extends over the edge of the tower and spins at a base of 3/4th.

Continued on D2

Gabbi Floirendo holds fundraiser on her special day

By Carmela Francisco
Lifestyle

GABBI Floirendo

GABRIELLE "GABBI" ANTOINETTE Floirendo, younger daughter of Tonyboy and Margie Floirendo, had a simple wish when she celebrated her 16th birthday. "I want to have a fun party with my friends like Alice in Wonderland," she told her mom.

Lifestyle Events Group, Eaton Manor Cebu and top set designer Rico Arellano set things in motion.

On Dec. 21, close friends and relatives walked into Gabbi's wonderland. A huge mat was laid out with King Imagine tables decked with flowerscapes by Noel Ali M.

In the area, the décor was magical. Baroque-style mirrors that gave distorted shapes were reminiscent of Alice's tea party and an enormous clock ticking away was the backdrop of the stage where the Philippine Youth Symphony of Irene Marcos played relaxer music of light classics and pop music to Cebu's first costume dinner. Even the entertaining pool had living ligaments dotted with red roses.

After cocktails, the royally dressed Queen and King announced the entrance of the honoree with her parents. Gabbi was lovely in a Jun Escario gown with a floral skirt in midnight blue. Margie was elegant and svelte in black lace and beige top. Claire Antonio Fernando was in a white gown by Jeanne de Ville, who is making waves in London.

A short video was shown to Gabbi's surprise, with friends giving various insights about her character: fun-loving, naughty, caring, thoughtful, sensitive, bright, like friends. Ann gave her most good wishes as she blew the candles on her cake—a Hok Ching creation of a giant mushroom with a jasmine Alice sitting prettily atop.

Highlight

But the evening's highlight was Gabbi's announcement that in lieu of gifts, a donation be given to Habitat for Humanity. A lucky many of over P2 million was raised to help build homes for 30 families in Barangay San Vicente, Panabo, Davao City, the Floirendos' hallmark.

MARGIE and Tonyboy Floirendo with their two daughters, Gabbi and Monica

Ed Mercado Events and Beauties then took over the party that had everybody dancing, starting with her grandfather Don Antonio Floirendo and wife Doña Nenita.

Gabbi got her wish...she had a grand time at her 16th birthday celebration surrounded not by the homeless as well.

Iloilo mall celebrates Dinagyang

SM CITY ILOILO CELEBRATES THE Dinagyang Festival this month with a touch of history, loads of fun, celebrity performances and amazing events.

The Dinagyang is a religious and cultural festival in Iloilo City held on the fourth Sunday of January in honor of the Sto. Niño and in celebration the arrival of Malay settlers in Panay who eventually bought the island by the sun.

The festival began after Rev. Fr. Ambrosio Galindez introduced the devotion to the Sto. Niño in his local parish in 1967. In 1968, Fr. Salpicio Enderes brought a replica of the original image of the Sto. Niño de Cebu to Iloilo as gift to the Parish of San José. The people, led by members of the Sto. Niño de Cebu, Iloilo chapter, gave the image a fitting reception from the airport to the streets.

Today, Dinagyang is a landmark festival, named the Best Tourism Event of the Philippines by the Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines (ATOP).

At SM City Iloilo, there'll be exhibits such as the Sto. Niño Dinagyang Photo Exhibit, and Dinagyang Through the Years, photo-op booths until Jan. 25. A mall-wide festival sale will also be held.

Also not to be missed is the 1st Dinagyang Amateur Dancing exhibits, chanda contest, and demonstrations of cars, motorcycles, in-store control cars, and planes until today at SM Carpark. Kids can join SM Storybook Ladz Dinagyang Warriors, a costume contest for kids today.

It will be great music and great food at the Dinagyang Food Festival and Street Party on Jan. 23-25. Rocking off the festivities on Jan. 23 will be Humbug, up Hotshot Chicken at Star FM Dinagyang Callality and Jennifer Lee.

Balls often will light up in the 2nd Dinagyang Pyrotechnics on Jan. 23-24. Sixteen competing teams from Western Visayas, Cebu and Mindoro will vie for the Best Locos in the Sky award in the Bloomberries, Manila's top 96th band, performs at SM Carpark on Jan. 24, 11 p.m.

Topping the festivities is Globe's TM 30-foot Fun Dinagyang Party featuring Barrique of Talgar on Jan. 25 at SM Carpark.

Visiting tourists and holidaymakers can relax at the Tourism Lounge until Jan. 25. This is a special project of SM City Iloilo with the Department of Tourism, Association of Iloilo Tour and Travel Operators, and the Iloilo Hotel, Resort and Restaurant Association.

Tourists who present their passports and airline tickets can enjoy free coffee, tea or juice, foot and back massage, free calls and internet, cell phone charging and relaxing recliners.

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a digital of the bride' gown, if any, to the Inquirer, PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1257 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required of the wedding but already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and on no-one is who orders.

ENRILE-MEARE

Vilanyn Enrile, son of engineer Gil J. Enrile and Preciosita B. Enrile, and Jerrol Ariar, daughter of retired Lt. Col Democrito G. Ariar of the Philippine Navy and Nenalin C. Ariar, were married recently at Nuestra Señora de Gracia Parish Church in Cavalcade Virgin, Makati City. The reception was held at Kalikasan Oval Garden in Fort Bonifacio Global City.

VILLASEÑOR-MEDINA

Janeen S. Villaseñor, sons of engineer Andrew and Vicky Villaseñor, and Theresa da Stella S. Medina, daughter of former Masbate Governor Antonio and Stella Medina, will exchange vows today, 2 p.m., at the archdiocesan Shrine of Nuestra Señora de Gracia Masbate. Bishop Joel Baylon will officiate the wedding.

TORRE-BAÑA

Anne Federico T. Torre, son of Jesse and Cynthia Torre, exchanged vows with Ina Oksana G. Baña, daughter of Adrian and Aurora Baña, recently at Sanctuario de San Antonio de Padua Park, Makati. Reception was held at Rigodon Ballroom of The Peninsula Manila. Edgar Allan crowned the groom of the bride and her entourage.

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What Marky Cielo left behind /Page E6

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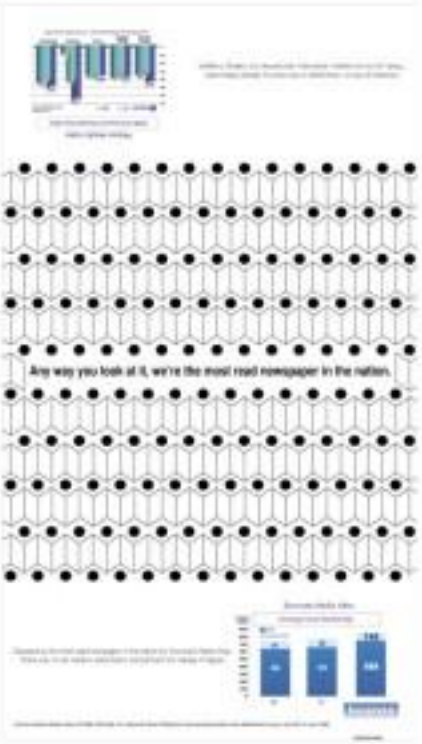


Beggars are not choosers

RUSHES SUNDAY

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff

CHARACTER ACTOR, CURRENTLY THE central figure in a raging scandal, has fallen on hard times, reported a source.

Betraying him is an old GMAdsor at Greenhills Mall, GA formerly hanged, for money.

Shocked, GW told GA there was only P200 in his wallet. GA replied, "That would do," and grabbed the cash before GW could protest.

New boy toy

Gay TV hunter has a new boy toy: Bradley Hirth.

BH previously made an appearance in Rushes as the paramour of GayWednesdays.

According to a reliable spy, GT stole BH away from GF.

"Can't blame BH," said the spy. "It now him or is nothing compared to some TV divas."

Bargain boy

Michael Hirt had his time in the limelight. Now he is reduced to peddling his wares to gay hoodlums for P15,000.

MH reportedly tells his prospective clients at an upscale gym, Fanny thing is, he fondly looks gayish, three days, bragged a aide, "It's a case of over-getting."

Multi-tasking

Telling from Palm Springs, Calif.-ette, where his "Pleasing" was screened to full houses, director Dante Nico Garcia reported, "For eight years people couldn't believe I'm also Isabel's [Andy from Sweden, his ex-] stylist. They laughed when I told them that, before the end-year screening, I tested Isabel's dress and she cooked breakfast and dinner."

Losing it at last

Angelina Jacqueline has struggled long and hard with his weight.

Now she's steadily losing it—the stress procedure. Her nemesis by the product she endorses, a drink called Revitilite, which she undoubtedly credits for her "newfound confidence."

Jackman on Kidman

Hugh Jackman, on his "heartfelt" co-star Nicole Kidman: "For first thing that comes to mind about Nicole is her professionalism . . . and I don't use that word lightly. Nicole works herself to the bone every single day to get everything out of every scene with every character."

And on getting his skin on the Hollywood Walk of Fame accords: "My dad does not an-

ally say much, but he hugged me and I think he was really proud."

Very long road

Mickey Rourke, after winning the Best Actor Golden Globe award for his role in "The Wrestler": "It's been a very long road back for me."

Happy birthdays!

Today: Kevin Costner is 54. Tomorrow: Phil Donoly of the Lively Brothers is 76, Dolly Parton is 63.

Jan. 20: Reine Wilson ("The Office") is 43. Jan. 21: Bobby Bowens is 33, Gwen Stefani is 39.

'Karate Kid' redux

MORE SOPO—Mr. Chan may be the new Mr. Miyagi, Jackie Chan is in talks with Columbia Pictures to star in a remake of "The Karate Kid," a spokesman for the Hollywood studio said Thursday.

The youth (Ralph Macchio in the original movies) will be played by Will Smith's son, Jaden Smith. And setting has been changed to Asia from California, with shooting due to start in Beijing this summer, according to Variety magazine.

Top of the tabloids

The top stories the stories in local tabloids this week. (And why we are stirred. If we are stirred.)

Yes or no?

• Sam Milby or Aaron Carter nagkadalawa na? (New product?)

• Julius Magsaysay nanood sa Bahong Bisaya dahil kumagulong nanginginig? (Gayon lang?)

• Sinkronik nanganganib ng mawala si Manny Dapidran? (Another one?)

• Kanselang Eula Manotoc or Pinky Webb nanonood dahilang Bisaya Festival? (Again.)

Maybe...

• Shaina Magdayao baka mahuntok si John Prats. (Knockout—suspected?)

• Kristine Hakili mahuntok sa isang tao? (Operation...speculation?)

• Pilita Corrales hindi na bibili ng bahay-cation? (Again...)

Confused, confirmed

• Baron Geisler nanonood na naman sa sarili? (Like seeing if new.)

• Pinky Pascual ayaw maging artista ang anak? (Dad won't think he's marrying up this.)

• Ayaw sabagay ng mga panot—Pinky. (That, too.)

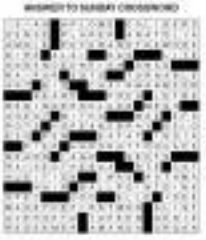
• Rochelle Ann Gochuico nanood ng Gary V. ("Lecture" should do it.)

• Rochelle Ann di daw ng nanay si Gabi! (Same.)

• Diamond nakikinig ng laptop ang ngalan ni Gab kay Rochelle. (Je hon-de-ni-gaan.)

(Reminders, Rambles)
E-mail us: rushes@inquirer.com.ph

ANSWERS TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
1 2 PROMENADE 3 4 5
WATCH SCRATCH & MATCH

POWER PLANT CINEMA
BEDTIME STORIES – SP
CHANGELING – R18
BRIDE WARS – PG13
LOVE ME AGAIN – PG13
TRANSPORTER 3 – PG13
CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON – PG13

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE
METRO MANILA THEATER ASSOCIATION
NOW SHOWING

DID YOU KNOW...

Audience fatigue?

LOS ANGELES—"Movies on the" launched Sunday 8 with 10 percent fewer viewers than watched last year's season opener, ratings showed Wednesday.

This, despite hoopla surrounding a new judge. The rally marks the lowest audience total for a season-debut episode since 2004. Reuters

Globe
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE
CHANGELING
DIGITAL PROJECTION
BED TIME STORIES
DIGITAL PROJECTION
BENJAMIN BUTTON
LOVE ME AGAIN
THE BRIDE WARS
TRANSPORTER 3
FULL STADIUM SEATING
'EXCLUSIVELY SHOWING AT
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE
CHANGELING

HOME sweet HOME
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NOW ON ITS LAST DAY

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SPOT 'MOTHER'

Can you spot "Mother" Ruby Yeres in this snap with Hi-Hair Coop members? He's aiming for Guinness World Records for fastest hair salon and rescue hairnets in a single venue in eight hours. Those who envision joint regional searches for participants, call TIMES Bar PHS. 4121126

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

LOVE ME AGAIN

CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

BEDTIME STORIES

BRIDE WARS

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SHANG CINEPLEX

1 BRIDE WARS PG-13 12:45, 3:05, 5:15, 7:30, 9:40

2 BENJAMIN BUTTON PG-13 11:40, 3:00, 6:20, 9:35

3 BEDTIME STORIES GP 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50

4 LOVE ME AGAIN PG-13 1:20, 4:00, 9:40, 9:20

TRANSPORTER PG-13 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

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PG-13

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JASON STATHAM

TRANSPORTER 3

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"BRAD PITT DOES HIS BEST WORK EVER."

★★★★

DIRECTOR DAVID FINCHER TAKES A MASSIVE LEAP FORWARD WITH THIS AMBITIOUSLY BEAUTIFUL FILM...

"AS EPIC TALE THAT CONTEMPLATES THE WONDERS OF LIFE – OF BIRTH AND DEATH, AND ROOM IN ALL LOVE."

BRAD PITT CATE BLANCHETT

The Curious Case of BENJAMIN BUTTON

AT THE CINEMAS

SM CINEMA

GLORIETTA 1	1 HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY	2 BRIDE WARS	3 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	4 LOVE ME AGAIN		
GLORIETTA 4	1 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	2 HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY	3 BRIDE WARS			
	4 TRANSPORTER 3	5 BEDTIME STORIES	6 LOVE ME AGAIN	7 ANG TANGING BAA NYONG LAHAT		
GREENBELT 1	1 BRIDE WARS	2 LOVE ME AGAIN				
GREENBELT 3	1 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	2 BRIDE WARS				
	3 HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY	4 BEDTIME STORIES	5 LOVE ME AGAIN			
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 LOVE ME AGAIN	2 BRIDE WARS				
	3 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	4 BEDTIME STORIES	5 HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY			
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 LOVE ME AGAIN	2 BEDTIME STORIES	3 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	4 SEX DRIVE		
MARKET! MARKET!	1 LOVE ME AGAIN	2 ANG TANGING BAA NYONG LAHAT				
	3 HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY	4 BRIDE WARS	5 LOVE ME AGAIN			
TRINOMA	1 ANG TANGING BAA NYONG LAHAT	2 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	3 BEDTIME STORIES	4 HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY		
	5 BRIDE WARS	6 LOVE ME AGAIN	7 LOVE ME AGAIN			

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18, Makati

Greenbelt — Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18, Makati

Alabang Town Center — Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18, Muntinlupa

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GALLERIA

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY
3 BEDTIME STORIES
4 BRIDE WARS
5 LOVE ME AGAIN
6 TRANSPORTER 3
7 THE SPIRIT
8 TWILIGHT
9 DESPERADAS 2
10 ANG TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT

ERMITA

1 THE SPIRIT
2 BRIDE WARS
3 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
4 BEDTIME STORIES
5 LOVE ME AGAIN
6 TRANSPORTER 3
7 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY
8 DESPERADAS 2
9 ANG TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT

METRO EAST

1 THE HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY
2 BRIDE WARS
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 TRANSPORTER 3
5 LOVE ME AGAIN
6 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
7 BEDTIME STORIES
8 TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT

NOVALICHES

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 LOVE ME AGAIN
3 BRIDE WARS
4 BEDTIME STORIES

PIONEER

1 BRIDE WARS
2 BEDTIME STORIES
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY

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2 LOVE ME AGAIN
3 ANG TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT
4 DAYO
5 SNAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 3

BAGUMBAYAN

1 DAYO
2 BEDTIME STORIES
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 BRIDE WARS

IMUS

1 BEDTIME STORIES
2 TRANSPORTER 3
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 BRIDE WARS

ANGELES

1 PASSENGERS
2 LOVE ME AGAIN
3 FOUR CHRISTMASES
4 BEDTIME STORIES

STARMILLS

1 DESPERADAS 2
2 LOVE ME AGAIN
3 SNAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 3
4 BEDTIME STORIES
5 ANG TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT
6 FOUR CHRISTMASES

BACOLOD

1 LOVE ME AGAIN
2 BEDTIME STORIES
3 ANG TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT
4 TWILIGHT
5 PRIDE AND GLORY
6 FOUR CHRISTMASES

ILOILO

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 ANG TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 PASSENGERS
5 SEX DRIVE
6 BEDTIME STORIES

NOW SHOWING at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

RP film trade's toughest fix

Belgian champion of RP films bats for vigilant preservation efforts

to page E6

orizing to international film festivals left and right," the pointed out. "The reason the attraction of the global audience is focused on us. We should all work to keep it there forever."

"Pointed" also flagged the Filipino's group of Asian critics, film educators and festival organizers formed in the 2006 Luigi Cuttino Oriental Film Bookclub last year.

"In the beginning, I just wanted to see myself on TV," said Joyce, who now runs three Bora restaurants from the Bonifacio BPC and also serves as councilor of the child charity of Manila. "Now I'm attending exciting trophies and taking part in

Addicted . . .

from page E6

discussed about the phenomenon, which has been termed 'ringiety' or 'nomophobia.' Anecdotal evidence suggests people feel the presence or pull of their cell phone even when it's not ringing, and they're not talking or texting. Also, they're not alone: without their phones, most of the phones owners have in the world," said B.J. Fogg, director of research and design at Stanford University's Persuasive Technology Lab.

No missed calls

"As humans beings, we're wrapped into our community, [responsible] to what's going on ... we're so attuned to the rhetoric of isolation and rejection, we'd rather make a mistake than miss a call," he said. "Our brain is going to be scanning and scanning and scanning to see if we have to respond socially to someone."

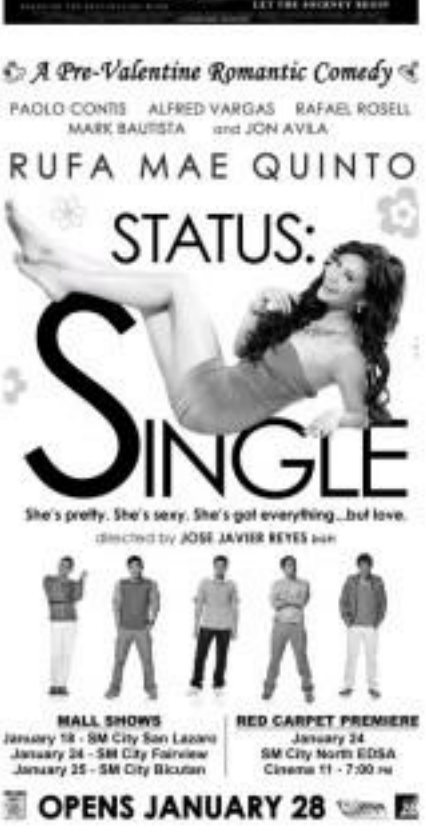
To confirm strikes, phantom vibrations are a point of pride. "Of course I get them," said Fred Wilson, a managing partner of Union Square Ventures, an early-stage venture capital firm based in New York. "I've been getting them for over 10 years since I started with the paper-style BlackBerry."

I felt that story was describing me. So when my BlackBerry went silent and blank on me one day a year or so ago, I was distraught. Yes, there is such a thing as a BlackBerry Withdrawal Syndrome. I rushed to my nearest BlackBerry service provider so they could get my unit working. They got my handheld running but my brightness was shortchanged. The screen went kaput again after I realized, a few steps from the store's door.

It was time to replace my unit. My wife thought it was just a trick so I could get the latest shiny model. I wouldn't dare think of such unfaithful desires to my fanged-up unit, which has served me well.

Here's why

So I was getting a new model at the store, I figured out why the old one probably went the



What Marky Cielo left behind

There's a renewed interest in films about Cordillera culture, starring Igorot actors

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JOAN CRAWFORD
as "Sadie Thompson"
JEAN BENNETT
THE HAUNTING OF HOLLY HARTLEY
A CURSE HE CAN'T ESCAPE
A LOVE THAT CAN'T BE SAVED

OPENS JANUARY 21
JIM CARREY
ONE LOOKS CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING
YES MAN

MTRCB PG-13
Kate HUDSON
Anne HATHAWAY
Bride WARS
Now Showing

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—MOVIE TREATMENTS (detailed, organized summaries) inspired by literary classics—legends, a contemporary hero, even Igorot superstitions—are popping out of the woodwork, thanks in part to the attention drawn to the Cordillera by the late young star Marky Cielo.

Some of the film ideas are from maverick filmmaker Celso Ad Castillo, who's recalling a movie about dam-blocking Dulag, the Kalinga chieftain killed by soldiers when he objected to a government plan to dam the Chico River in the 1980s. Dulag has become an icon among Cordillera activists.

Other film treatments are brain of cult support generated by "by-byang," a movie that starred Jao Mapa, Dante Evangelista and Igorot actors.

Common factor

Director Nick Lizaso has reportedly discussed plans for a film about a bottle cave a child among marauding United Issaks in Benguet and Ifu Province), wannabe (native priests), soldiers and Boni Aguio Cabalatan.

Linking these projects is aspiring 22-year-old actor Allapoyan, who's been in demand for movie material about the Cordillera. Allapoyan is Michael Leni Dulay, one of the supporting actors in "by-byang."

His 44-year-old mother, Evangeline Inocencio Dulay, is an Igorot "shaman" recognized by the Department of Tourism. She performs the rituals recited by her elders during buddles in front of community ritual fires.

Mario Wasdo, founder of Ants Bordhoya, said seven like Allapoyan have become valuable because of the rich and authentic history they are able to share.

Bonets said Allapoyan (whom he mentors) and many other Igorot talents are looking forward to the film projects, which they believe can be explained on account of the attention given to Cielo.

Back to their roots

A THIN 17 years, Cielo died suddenly last Dec. 7, but not before making his mark. He was reportedly "wanted" as Igorot by Abscondidad Inez of his competition in GMA-7's "Survivor Philippines" reborn month.

As a result, online and text support poured in from Cordilleras, entering Cielo's victory in that competition as well as in succeeding film and TV projects.

Allapoyan said he and his mother frequently got online notes to explain, or correct, Igorot references used in some of the movie treatments. He admitted that he started dwelling on his Cordillerian roots only when he started filming "by-byang."

He explains, "I grew up in Baguio City and did not experience limited stereotyping and harassment that my parents were through. Those were never brought to our homes."

Bonets noted that Igorot actors had been supported mostly their own because of new-found respect for the culture that was sweeping filmmakers.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

ALAGUTON (Melanie Lenz Dulay), son of an Igorot shaman

Addicted to a Berry, not Halle

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Robert V. Noguchi

LOS ANGELES—LET'S DEVIL FROM those celebs today.

Instead, please indulge me with a few personal observations. Call them the first in an occasional series of ramblings of a senior citizen fed up by the insanity noises and mixed-up stories, who wouldn't feel the energy today to make some more unwed mistakes.

I have a confession to make. I am addicted to my BlackBerry.

My addictive obsession with my little handheld device is no Delmar anywhere that an LA TV news crew filming a story on BlackBerry addictions in a mall ignored their mad right away. He was checking his BlackBerry while riding down the escalator oblivious to the world around him. That was me. They interviewed me. They even wanted to follow me around the house as I exhibited my inexcusable addiction even in my cars. I said no.

But I did say half-seriously that if it would be possible to grab BlackBerrys onto our hands or arms, I would be the first to sign up.

To the house, my wife Janet laughs at the sight of me in front of the computer, reading e-mails, and yet I still occasionally check my trusted small, metallic gray friend.

The last thing I do before I hit the sack at night is plug my BlackBerry to its battery recharger. The sight of the flashing green light is a balm to my always eyes, assuring me that my BlackBerry's battery is recharging for next day's action. And when I wake up, the first thing I pick up is . . . you guessed right.

Don't text and drive

2009 is not a good year for my addiction. A law has just gone into effect in California banning drivers from texting while driving. Infraction: back home, imagine that! Soon, when I am driving on Ufo notoriously traffic-clogged freeways, I just look at my BlackBerry longingly. How do I describe my feeling when the BlackBerry vibrates while I'm driving and I can't pick it up to read the incoming e-mail or text? Ladies and gents, it's like, the hunk or babe of your dreams throws you a come-hither glance at a party and all you could do is . . . nothing. Yes, it's terrible. Uncanny.

On plane takeoffs, I text before the very last second before turning off my handheld. At noon at the plane's time hit the runway, guess who's the first in the plane to reach for his pocket-rehat? You're right again.

I've written news-breaking stories just using the BlackBerry. I once entered napalt from a dinner in Toronto, walked to the men's room, entered a stall, locked the door, sat on the toilet bowl and started typing away on the tiny-tiny keyboard. When I returned to the dinner table, no one guessed I just filed a story with my BlackBerry.

I thought I was finally going nuts with my addiction when I started feeling vibrations on those rare occasions when my BlackBerry was not in my shirt or pants pocket or anywhere on my body or was not even close to my body. It turned out that I was not alone. The Associated Press actually published a story on these strange sensations. AP even has a name for them: Blackberry Phantom Vibrations.

Here are excerpts from the AP story: "Research in the area is scant, but Gentile

ADDICTED E3

No sad songs for 'Ploning'

DIRECTOR DANTE NICO GARCIA SAID on Friday Manila and supporters shouldn't be sad for him or his actress-lady Jean Garcia because their film "Ploning" did not make the grade for the Best Foreign Language Film race in the Oscars.

"People have been sending me messages in my Facebook account," Garcia, calling from Palm Springs, California, related. "Honestly, just to have [been considered for the award] is more than enough."

He said he and Garcia were "just like kids enjoying a little trip," finding the whole experience "interesting."

They stayed for a while in Hollywood, enjoying, for a moment, "Ploning" was one of 65 movies considered. Only this week, the short list for the category was announced.

The filmmaker said they both learned from the Oscar journey, the success, "Ploning is of course. We never meant to make foreign-aware of our films."

"Ploning" was screened to full houses at the Palm Springs Film Festival. The gala awards night on Jan. 6 was unforgettable for Garcia. "I was in the same place (Palm Springs Convention Center) as Clint Eastwood, Sean Penn, Gus van Sant, Anne Hathaway, Kathy Bates and Penelope Cruz."

Beyond Sun Diego A

DANTE Nico Garcia and Jean Ann Garcia at the Palm Springs festival

PAMALAPay or Alfredo Lim congratulates councilor actor Pat Garcia, while Belgian Ambassador to the Philippines Gregoire Van Ackin and Brussels International film fest founder/director Robert Malengreau (R) applaud.

RP film trade's toughest fix

By Marlon R. Cruz

FILM CONVENTION IS THE LOCAL movie industry's toughest problem, according to Robert Malengreau, founder and director of the Brussels International Film Festival.

"Copies of films by cinema master Lino Brocka, as well as the others, have disappeared. This is such a pity," said Malengreau, a known lover of Filipino films, during a formal dinner reception in his honor at the Manila City Hall on Wednesday.

To make matters worse, he said, there is no existing a 35-mm film that was really classy," he told Inquirer Entertainment. He noted that his country has one of the biggest film conservation units in the world, being home to the Royal Belgian Film Archive and Cinematheque, which features over 80,000 reels from different parts of the world. "Something should be done to preserve your films. They are your legacy."

Malengreau has helped Pinoy filmmakers for the past 20 years by bringing their works to Europe and encouraging them to join various film festivals there.

The gathering on Wednesday night was also in honor of actor Pat Garcia and "Sinatra" director Joel Lamangan, both winners in the 35th Brussels IFF held last year. The event was co-hosted by Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and Belgian Ambassador to the Philippines Gregoire Verbiest.

Garcia was given the Prix de Meilleur Jeu Actor Award. for playing lead in two films entries—Marylo J. delos Reyes' sex film "Sinner" and Lamangan's "Sinta," about the Mangyan tribe in Mindoro involved in illegal logging. Lamangan's work was declared Best Asian Film.

"The enjoyment of European to our work in Brussels was overwhelming," said Jo Reyes. "The Filipino community there is also very supportive. The theaters [that screened 'Sinta' and 'Sinner'] were packed. In 2004, when I went there for 'Magdalena,' the group rents front of cocktails."

He continued: "I think people are slowly recognizing Pinoy movies. We didn't think we'd make it. The competition was very stiff. The Arab Egypt, Morocco, United Arab Emirates] presence was overwhelming—the festival is celebrated with Arab blends [in Belgium]."

Filipino films are "hot" these days, said Berlanger, in the same way as Mongolian films were "greatly desired" few years back. "We're